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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-030 *13 February 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Reports of Mecca Tripartite Summit 'Baseless'

NC1102102696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1000 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mecca, 11 Feb (MENA)—MENA has learned that reports about a possible tripartite summit among President Husni Mubarak, Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and Jordanian King Husayn in Mecca are baseless.

President Mubarak is scheduled to leave Jiddah this afternoon; that is, before King Husayn's arrival in Jiddah on his first official visit to Saudi Arabia since the Gulf war.

President Mubarak arrived in Mecca yesterday to perform the minor pilgrimage.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Yemen Envoy Briefs Arab League Chief on Dispute

NC1202180696 Cairo MENA in English 1619 GMT 12 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 12 Feb (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today met with Yemen's Ambassador to Egypt Ahmad Luqman who is also Yemen's chief delegate to the Arab League.

Following the meeting, Luqman said he briefed Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid on the latest developments of the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over Hanish Island voicing satisfaction over French mediatory efforts on that score.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 6 Feb

NC1002073296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 6 February edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Majdi Husayn Warns That Darkness Is Descending on Country
2. Majdi Husayn Faces Trial in New Slander Case
3. Interior Minister's Son Said Buying Expensive Real Estate
4. Lawyers Association Officials Interviewed on Sequestration
5. Brotherhood Guide Calls For Proper Fasting, Encourages Detainees
6. Implications of Israel's Falasha Blood Donations Affair Viewed
7. Pre-Election Detainees Held at New Damanhur Prison
8. News in Brief on MENA, Majdi Husayn, Military Court Verdicts

MAJDI HUSAYN WARNS THAT DARKNESS IS DESCENDING ON COUNTRY

In a 2,500-word article on page 2 chief editor Majdi Husayn gives a list of "obscurantist achievements" that have occurred since late 1994 to illustrate his view that the country is rapidly sliding into a "state of total darkness" that is worse than "totalitarianism" and represents a "decline" even when compared with "the one-party era." The list includes the month-long detention "on feeble grounds" of Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn, the replacement of elected university college deans and local village officials with government appointees chosen for their "security consciousness," the successive "closure" of professional associations and the heavy- handed treatment of trade unions, "the slaughtering of freedom of the press," the "persecution of the Muslim Brothers," a campaign against human rights organizations, and the "total rigging of the People's Assembly elections."

He warns against continuing efforts to "liquidate the Lawyers Association in a scenario similar to the one used against the Engineers Association" and to "liquidate legitimate political parties by drying up their financial resources." He draws attention to the "flagrant campaign against the Labor Party" and the "beginning of the second chapter in the campaign against freedom of the press."

In his account of the above measures, Majdi Husayn refers to the government variously as the "state," the "rule," "they"—this being a common usage in AL-SHA'B—and the "total blackout organization."

In his comments on the selection of village chiefs by appointment instead of election, he says: "That we live in a police state is not a new discovery. After all, we have lived under emergency law for 15 years, but the seriousness of this new development is that it constitutes a type of coup d'etat aimed at making the police state structure penetrate right down to the bone."

In summing up his conclusions, Majdi Husayn says "total darkness" will indeed envelop the country by the end of 1996 unless "we resist the 'total blackout organization' with all our strength."

He berates AL-AHRAM chief editor Ibrahim Nafi' for suggesting that the public does not heed the Labor party's call to act against the government and says that

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the time for the "great popular confrontation" will come when God decides.

"The masses have acted and resisted in hundreds of small and medium battles, but they have certainly not yet moved toward the major showdown. Only God knows when it will take place."

He believes, however, that the great confrontation is coming: "We have seen splendid manifestations of God's power in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Turkey. Do you think that Egypt is too difficult a case for the Almighty Exalted God?"

He tells Nafi' that "the longevity of the corrupters' rule does not render it credible or legitimate" but is merely "a tribulation from God."

He warns all "patriotic forces and all honorable persons" that the next few months will be decisive. Referring to the recent sequestration order against the Lawyers Association, he urges unity among all political parties and professional associations and says that the government will try to isolate these "citadels of liberty and democracy" in order to bring them down one by one.

He concludes his article with the following Koranic verse: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you inheritors in the earth."

The above article is accompanied by a two-column cartoon which shows six figures wearing striped prison suits and eye-masks, carrying key-rings and flashlights, standing in a dark place. Their leader, identical to the rest but with a sack slung over his shoulder, is talking into a cellular phone. He is saying: "Everything is going according to plan, sir. We have turned the place completely dark and the real work can now begin."

MAJDI HUSAYN FACES TRIAL IN NEW SLANDER CASE

Several items on page 1, including the leading story, deal with chief editor Majdi Husayn's conflicts with Law 93/1995 which the paper describes as "the Egyptian press assassination law."

Two brief items, of 150 and 100 words, highlight BBC television and radio reports on the sentencing of Majdi Husayn to a jail term in a libel case brought by Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi's son, 'Ala'. One of the items reports that BBC Television's Arabic service "interrupted its cast" and conducted an interview with Majdi Husayn to discuss the sentence passed against him.

The 800-word leading story says that Majdi Husayn; Mustafa Bakri, AL-AHRAR chief editor; and Mahmud Bakri, chief editor of SAWT HULWAN and managing editor of AL-SHA'B, have been referred to the Cairo Criminal Court to answer charges of slander brought by a former Awqaf minister.

The report adds that the Journalists Association issued a statement expressing extreme concern about the policy of referring journalists to the courts on the strength of Law 93, which "violates the most basic rules of justice and fairness."

INTERIOR MINISTER'S SON SAID BUYING EXPENSIVE REAL ESTATE

The 6 February issue's banner headlines deal with three different stories. The one referring to the previous story reads: "A Blatant Onslaught to Terminate Press Freedoms: Majdi Husayn, Mustafa and Mahmud Bakri To Face Trial."

Another banner headline, referring to a story on page 3, reads: "The Interior Minister's Son Buys Six High-Rise Apartment Buildings."

The son in this story is not 'Ala' al-Alfi, who brought a libel action against Majdi Husayn, but another son called 'Adil al-Alfi. A 3,500-word report by 'Ali al-Qammash on page 3 says that al-Alfi has purchased six high-rise apartment buildings which used to belong to someone called Nabil al-Mashriqi, who is described by the newspaper as "a whale,"—meaning someone involved in major financial fraud or someone who has built a real estate empire by fraudulent means.

The report does not openly accuse 'Adil al-Alfi of any crime, but hints at irregularities in the transaction and casts doubt on who really owns the buildings now because 'Adil al-Alfi bought them from al-Mashriqi's business partners although al-Mashriqi, who is now in jail, still has documents from his former partners giving him power of attorney to exploit the land on which the buildings stand.

A related 700-word report by 'Ala' al-'Aswani on page 2 says that 'Adil al-Alfi recently bought a store in Heliopolis for 1.150 million pounds and that after internal decoration, furnishing, and stocking it with goods, the store will eventually cost several million pounds. Writing under the headline "One Million Pounds... From Where?", al-Aswani says that the financial resources of government officials and their family members should be made open to the public, just as politicians do in democratic countries.

LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED ON SEQUESTRATION

A 1,500-word report by Khalid Yunus on page 3 on the sequestration order issued by a Cairo court against the

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Lawyers Association incorporates two brief interviews with the association's chairman Ahmad al-Khawajah and secretary general Sayf al-Islam Hasan al-Banna. Al-Khawajah says he opposes sequestration orders against any association because it is undemocratic. He says he will appeal against the sequestration order, denies that there have been illegal practices within the association, but admits that there have been "financial excesses" represented by "preferential treatment given to the adherents of a certain stream."

Al-Banna, representing the Islamist stream in the association, denies that the Islamist stream has given preferential treatment to its supporters and says that the association had provided assistance, including medical expenses, to the families of the same lawyers who later brought the sequestration lawsuit against the association. He also says that the Lawyers Association has always treated its Coptic members very well.

BROTHERHOOD GUIDE CALLS FOR PROPER FASTING, ENCOURAGES DETAINEES

In a 1,200-word article on page 5, Muslim Brotherhood General Guide Mustafa Mashhur discusses the "vicious war" waged by several countries against the Muslim Brothers in the form of trials based on false charges. He says that this war is particularly fierce in Egypt because of the country's stature and the fact that it was the birthplace of the Muslim Brotherhood. Noting that the Muslim Brothers are continuing to preach the word of God with patience and endurance, he urges the Muslim public at large to take the Brothers as an example and defend Islam. Mashhur says that this endeavor needs the spiritual strength that sound fasting in Ramadan can provide. He calls on Muslims to fast properly and not to break their fast with rich foods or stay up late watching television quiz shows. He addresses a message to imprisoned Islamists exhorting them to patience and faith.

IMPLICATIONS OF ISRAEL'S FALASHA BLOOD DONATIONS AFFAIR VIEWED

Dr. 'Umar Mahjub, a frequent backpage columnist, discusses the dispute in Israel over the Ethiopian blood donation affair. In a 2,500-word article on page 12 called "Falasha Blood Exposes Israel's Zionism," he says that Zionism is a racist movement and the world, particularly the Arabs, have not done enough to expose this fact. He says that the Arabs have always been too preoccupied with day-to- day political differences with Israel to focus on exposing the "ideological sources of Zionist racism" and were afraid of being branded as anti-Semites if they did. In consequence, Arab ideological resistance to Zionism has declined. He says that the Ethiopian Jews in Israel complain that they are treated as fourth- class citizens, after the European Jews, oriental Jews, and the Israeli Arabs.

PRE-ELECTION DETAINEES HELD AT NEW DAMANHUR PRISON

A 2,000-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad on page 4 describes the hardships suffered by 2,500 people who were held in various jails for 28 days prior to the People's Assembly elections on 29 November. The report says that these people, who included "physicians, engineers and architects, lawyers, teachers, religious scholars, and rural farm workers" were "kidnapped from their homes on the pretext that they were supporters of the Islamic alliance candidates."

The report describes the "hardships and sufferings" to which the 2,500 "hostages" were subjected, claiming that one of the jails where they were kept was the new "Bastille" between Damanhur and Alexandria, a 100-feddan prison that the headline of the article describes as: "Damanhur's Iron Bastille: Egypt's Newest Political Jail."

The report says the jail is surrounded by a high stone wall and barbed wire and that its various wings are also separated from each other by steel fences. It adds that the 2,500 detainees were subjected to indignities and hardships that included being stripped of their clothing in cold weather and given worn prison uniforms, being forced to run the gauntlet between two rows of security troops who beat them up, insufficient food, drinking water, and washing facilities, being forced to use a common toilet without a door, and denial of medicines and medical care.

NEWS IN BRIEF ON MENA, MAJDI HUSAYN, MILITARY COURT VERDICTS

1. An unattributed 150-word report on page 1 says that the Journalists Association has formed a fact-finding committee to investigate the "new crisis provoked by Mustafa Najib, chairman of the MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY [MENA] when he carried out a series of arbitrary job transfers against several leading journalists there, including moving some of them to nonjournalistic jobs." The report says that the affected employees complained to President Mubarak and the government about the transfers.

2. A 50-word report on page 1 says that the Canadian Consulate in Cairo refused to grant a visa to chief editor Majdi Husayn who wanted to travel to Canada to deliver a series of lectures at some cultural and Islamic centers there.

3. A 250-word report on page 1 says that the defense lawyers of 33 Muslim Brothers have filed an appeal with the Administrative Court challenging the president's and defense minister's ratification of the jail sentences

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handed them by a military court. The appeal challenges the military court's jurisdiction over the case and says it should have been examined by the Higher State Security Court.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports Israel Closes West Bank, Gaza

JN1302084496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation authorities continue to impose their military siege on all the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The occupation authorities imposed the military siege as of 2100 yesterday and until further notice without giving any justifications.

The military authorities continue their military siege on Ramallah and ban citizens from entering or leaving it.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat—Israeli Measures Violate Accord

JN1202135596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian-Israeli Security Committee held an emergency meeting last night in the presence of Brigadier General Ziyad al-Atrash, head of the Palestinian side on the committee, and Gen. (Kadje) head of the Israeli side. Legislative Council Member Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat attended the meeting.

Dr.'Urayqat said following the meeting that what Israel is doing with respect to Rachel's tomb and the construction of the Gaza airport completely violate the Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Rudaynah—Israel Hampers Peace Process

JN1302085296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, called on the Israeli Government to implement agreements to render the peace process a success.

Abu-Rudaynah said Israel is fully responsible for the violations carried out by its agencies. He said that these violations conflict with the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement. In this respect, the Palestinian official noted that the Israeli authorities have not released female Palestinian detainees, continue with the policy of land confiscations, and have not opened safe passages.

Abu-Rudaynah also pointed out what the occupation forces are doing in the area of Rachel's Tomb. President 'Arafat's adviser accused the Israeli side of hampering the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: Paper on Israeli Elections' Impact on Peace

TA1202193196 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 13

[Editorial: "The Israeli Elections and the Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night's official announcement in Israel on advancing the date of the 14th Knesset elections from October to the second half of May or the beginning of June affirms that the Israeli Labor Party, led by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, chose to take this step because of several considerations. Foremost of these is that the Labor Party looks forward to securing its hold on power for another four years.

Naturally, regardless of the nature of these considerations and the disagreement among observers and analysts about the impact of this development on the peace process, and bearing in mind that the election process in Israel is an internal affair; the potential effect of the climate of these elections and their results on the peace process in general, and the Palestinian-Israeli track in particular, requires one to underscore several points which are as interrelated as are these elections with and their impact on the peace process.

The first point is that the peace process that was launched in Madrid and its subsequent developments, leading to the interim Oslo and Cairo agreements and the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, and the continuation of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations were an initial effort compatible with international and regional developments, which pushed for the launching of peace talks on the basis of foundations and principles agreed upon between the parties concerned and with international guarantees, including those by the cosponsors, America and Russia. From this premise, it is difficult to imagine that one side can turn this equation upside down, particularly following the numerous new facts on the ground such as implementation of the first stage of the Oslo accords, Israeli redeployment in the West Bank, and the Palestinian elections which produced the first elected Palestinian Legislative Council.

The second point is that the peace process track is not subject to the internal affairs of this or that party of the peace process, which is founded between recognized countries and parties and on the basis of international agreements binding on all the parties. Therefore, the

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results of the Israeli elections will not be the decisive factor in the peace process. To recall, the Madrid conference was convened when the Likud was in power in Israel.

The more important aspect of the Israeli elections' connection with the peace process is the timing between the elections and the transitional period for forming a new government, and the beginning of the final solution talks on the Palestinian track. In accordance with the provisions of the signed agreements, Israel is officially obligated to hold these talks according to the set timetable. Any delay or evasion will constitute a flagrant violation of the agreements.

In short, the early Israeli elections cannot be seen as obstructing or serving the peace process. More important is the official Israeli position — regardless of who is in power — that will be put forward whether with regard to the Palestinian track or the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. In this context, the more difficult and decisive stage of the peace talks is still ahead of us. The elements of success depend not on who wins the Israeli elections but on the seriousness of the international effort and the cosponsors' stance in continuing to advance the peace process toward the realization of the aspired for goals.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Said To Procrastinate on Hawatimah's Return

TA1202193396 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Hamdi Farraj]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bethlehem — A responsible source in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] has stated that the Israeli authorities are still dragging their feet with regard to the return of DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah to the homeland.

'Umar 'Assaf, a DFLP Political Bureau member, said that in light of information obtained recently by the Front, it is possible that Israel will back down from what Shim'on Peres recently proposed regarding the return of Palestinian leaders, especially as nothing concrete has been worked out so far.

He added that whatever has been done has not exceeded media statements aimed at spreading a false political climate, behind which the reality of Israeli intentions is concealed. 'Assaf said that this makes us doubt the reality of these intentions. He noted that if Israel is really serious about Peres' statements, then it must turn these measures into practical realities.

He called on the Palestinian Authority to fulfill its role in demanding Israel guarantee the right of repatriation for all.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Urged To Stop Settlement Activities

JN1202185096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Statement issued by the National and Islamic Committee for Confronting Settlements; read by Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, Palestinian Authority minister of culture and information, at al-Birah Municipality on 12 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The National and Islamic Committee met at al-Birah Municipality on 12 February. Despite the siege the occupation forces imposed on Ramallah and al-Birah, a number of committee members managed to attend this meeting. The committee focused on the issue of Israeli expansion of settlements in the Palestinian territories after the Taba agreement through bypass roads, security areas and positions, and quarries. This is in addition to Israel's policy of building new settlements and expanding existing settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The committee decided the following:

1. The current onslaught of settlements against Palestinian territories is considered the most serious in a series of Israeli settlement building because it is an escalated attempt to impose a formula for a final solution on the ground. This formula entrenches the cancerous existence of settlements in the Palestinian territories, fragments the society and the homeland's geographic structure, and prevents the people from reaching the stage of independence and statehood.

What is strange is that Israeli occupation authorities are carrying out these hostile acts behind a curtain, which is deceptive and misleading to world public opinion — to the effect that Israel's plundering enjoys the approval of the Palestinian Authority and that the Israeli Government is committed to its agreements with the Palestinian side and is continuing it effort to reach the best solution to the Palestinian issue.

2. The National and Islamic Committee urges the National Authority to immediately adopt a stand on this eminent danger, which has raised the sentiments of all our people. This should be through a decisive stand on the flagrant and destructive Israeli violations. The continuation of these violations threatens the outbreak of popular outrage and torpedoing the entire peace process. The committee also demands that the National Authority expose the misleading Israeli policy, which claims that

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the Palestinian issue has been solved, that the PLO did not live up to its commitments, and that the National Authority gave the green light to peddle the policy of tearing the homeland apart through bypass roads.

3. The National and Islamic Committee urges members of the Palestine National Council and National Assembly not to amend the provisions of the PLO National Charter before Israel lives up to its commitments. Ahead of these commitments is halting the conspiracy of settlement expansion and the security control system, lifting the siege of Arab Jerusalem, and releasing all Palestinian prisoners.

4. The National and Islamic Committee urges all national and Islamic forces and our people to immediately make an organized move to defend the territories that are threatened by confiscation.

5. The National and Islamic Committee urges Arab countries to stop the policy of normalization with Israel. The Palestinian leadership is also urged to ask the Arab League Council to hold an urgent session to discuss this serious situation.

6. The National and Islamic Committee urges the Palestinian leadership to call on the UN Security Council to convene to discuss these Israeli violations.

7. The National and Islamic Committee urges peace forces in Israel to act immediately to confront this expansionist policy, which destroys the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's al-Hasan on Need for Palestinian Unity

NC1302114296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0745 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 13 Feb (MENA)—Hani al-Hasan, a member of the Fatah Movement's central committee, has emphasized the need to organize the Palestinian situation by raising the slogan of "everyone united" in the battle over the final solution with Israel. He stressed the need to establish a national Palestinian unity that determines strategic principles and tactics, pointing out that all the members of the PLO executive committee will soon return to Palestine to provide the authority needed to represent the Palestinian people's unity inside [the territories] and protect the fixed Palestinian principles.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM today, al-Hasan said the problem of establishing the rights and coping with the outcome of the forthcoming negotiations with Israel requires the mobilization of energies on the local, regional, and international levels. He pointed out that the Palestinians today have no problem on the international level, because the United States and Europe are more understanding of the Palestinian situation and the United States is being objective. But the policy cannot invest the international warmth and objectivity unless the regional situation calls for it, since international interests, and not the individual status of a specific people or government, are now in focus, he said. This highlights the importance of achieving harmony between the Palestinian regional situation and the influential Arab powers, primarily Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, he added.

Al-Hasan added that indulging in settlements requires us and the Israelis to realize that a collective agreement is a must to achieve strategic and positive results.

Hani al-Hasan added: We are doing our best to restore relations with sister Syria, which withstood and sacrificed much for the Palestinian issue. He said President al-Asad's presence gave Syria a significant role, adding that efforts are being made in public and indirect contacts are being held to organize Syrian-Palestinian relations.

Commenting on the Likud party possibly replacing Labor in the elections, al-Hasan said: We make no distinction between the Likud and the Labor parties in terms of Israel's interest in peace. Peres is a fiercer defender of Israel's strategic interests, although the approach differs. Peres is a vicious fighter and might be more dangerous than Likud, particularly since he has a more panoramic view of regional developments, al-Hasan said, adding that Likud cannot ignore the global interest in peace, which is a primary need necessitated by the economic interests of the capitalist community.

Palestinian Affairs: Opposition May Participate in Final Talks

TA1202184296 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 10 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Musa al-Rimawi]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian opposition, which has refused to participate in the Palestinian-Israeli talks since the Madrid conference and which subsequently announced its categorical rejection of the Oslo, Cairo, and Taba agreements and called for thwarting them, might find itself forced or willing to participate in the final stage talks, especially as the topics that will be discussed in those talks are linked to the fate of the entire Palestinian people and concern their principal issues, namely: Jerusalem, the settlements, refugees, borders, and sovereignty. These issues were postponed to the final stage talks because this was the main objection of the opposition factions to the previous agreements.

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'Umar 'Assaf, a Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] leader, said that "the DFLP will not hesitate to participate in the final settlement talks if a number of conditions are met. The most important of these is that leading PLO bodies, headed by the Palestine National Council [PNC], should assess the negotiating process and set up a new mechanism for negotiations through a Palestinian delegation formed by the PNC. The PNC should also determine the bases for negotiations on the basis of international legitimacy Resolutions 242, 338, and 194."

'Assaf affirmed that the final settlement issues concern the Palestinian people wherever they reside. This requires that the Palestinian cause be referred back to the national reference point that represents the Palestinian people, the PLO.

In a related development, Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader, stressed the importance of the final stage talks and their direct role in affecting the shape of the Palestinian future in its various political, demographic, and topographic aspects. Therefore, he said: "I sense the importance of participating in determining the Palestinian negotiating position, which should not be left as a monopoly in the hands of the same negotiators who led us to the Oslo A and B agreements."

Al-Maliki added that the final talks will cover many issues and spheres that are considered to be extremely important and sensitive. The results of these talks will be affected by the Oslo A and B negotiations.

As for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], it seems that its position on this issue will be linked to the results of the current dialogue between it and the Palestinian Authority.

With regard to the Palestinian People's Party [PPP], which participated in the Madrid and Washington talks and later boycotted them and expressed many reservations with the Cairo and Taba agreements, they will almost certainly participate again in the final stage of talks. Ghassan al-Khatib, a PPP leader, has affirmed that the party supports the principle of negotiations, adding "our nonparticipation in them stems from the way the talks have been conducted, especially the absence of a collective reference point and an agreed upon negotiating makeup. Moreover, our nonparticipation is due to the existence of individual decisionmaking which is not subject to the decisions of official bodies." He added that the party will participate in the negotiations if the above causes are removed.

Dr. al-Maliki believes that if the opposition decides not to participate directly in the talks, it will be able to express its views, spell out its proposals, and indirectly affect the Palestinian negotiating position in different available ways such as academic meetings, seminars, and conferences. He added: "The important thing is that determining the course of the final negotiations and their results should not be left to the Oslo negotiators." Al-Maliki believes that relinquishing this responsibility will be a new mistake that will be added to a series of mistakes which the Palestinian opposition is still committing.

Palestinian Affairs: Qaddumi—Most Palestinians Oppose Oslo Process

MM1202145696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Qaddumi Says: I Am Not Alone in my Opposition to the Oslo Agreement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — PLO Political Department Head Faruq Qaddumi (Abu-al-Lutf) has said that he is not alone in his opposition to the Oslo agreement, since he is supported by 90 percent of Palestinians abroad and 50 percent of the Palestinians in the self-rule areas, who are opposed to this faltering process.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Qaddumi pointed out that the Palestinian opposition aims at this stage to expand itself within the framework of one institution, and it does not want to deviate from Palestinian legitimacy. In fact its aim is to expand the opposition within the PLO framework, provided that democratic principles are adopted. In the sense that, if the majority supports the peace process, the opposition must not object, provided no concessions are made as regards the fundamental issues.

Qaddumi stressed that the Palestinian opposition is not just opposition for the sake of opposition. He said: "If the people of the Oslo agreement manage to make a certain achievement, we will tell them yes and announce that we are wrong. But if they try to offer fundamental concessions, we will tell them: No, you are wrong and we are right."

Abu-al-Lutf stressed that those opposed to the Oslo agreement are in constant contact and coordination to prevent concessions being made on the fundamental issues, which he specified as the refugees' right to repatriation, the removal of the settlements, and the return of Jerusalem.

He said that the opposition is entitled to take any measures if the National Authority makes any concessions with regard to these fundamental issues.

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Qaddumi said that "the days will prove that the Palestinian opposition is right and that what we are saying is correct and others should accept it."

Qaddumi denied that it is too late for what he is demanding, saying that "the Palestinian people are capable of producing better leaderships than the current ones."

On the recent Palestinian elections and the scale of the turnout as an indication of the approval of the peace process, Qaddumi denied that "the voting was not on the Oslo agreement." He said that "the voters said yes to Fatah, and I am certain that, if the voting was on the Oslo agreement, this agreement would have collapsed."

Qaddumi reiterated his position, namely that "the PLO Executive Committee is the quarter responsible for the negotiations of the final phase."

He pointed out that the resolution adopted by the PLO Central Council in Tunis recently stipulated that the Palestinian Authority's political and legislative authority is the Executive Committee and the [Palestine] National Council.

Abu-al-Lutf stressed that he is playing a patriotic role at this stage and that he is not after leadership or power, because he "abhors such power," which does not tempt him. He likened himself to an architect, who builds houses for others to live in. This is his aim in this march. He said: "If some people are tired and want to reach quickly and in a short period of time, I tell them that the Palestinian issue requires patience and national consensus."

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's 'Abbas—'Nothing Wrong' With Discussing Charter

MM1202150296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 5

[Report on interview with PLO Executive Committee Member Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin) by Jihan al-Husayni in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin), member of the PLO Executive Committee, has affirmed the need for the amendment of the PLO's charter, pointing out that the members of the [Palestine] National Council [PNC] will be summoned in the very near future to discuss a number of issues including the revision of the charter.

In an interview with AL-HAYAH, Abu-Mazin said that there is nothing wrong with summoning the PNC to meet to discuss the charter, particularly as the charter now contains articles that are longer compatible with the current stage. This is a fact which we have to face up to.

Speaking of the holding of early Israeli elections and the possible victory of the right-wing Likud Party in these elections, Abu-Mazin said: "We have no alternative but to deal with the outcome of these elections. Everything is possible. The assumption of power by the Likud might impede the peace process. However, the final word rests with the Israeli people."

Asked if the question of the dissolution of the PLO at some future date was on the cards, he replied: "Not before it completes its role and carries out its commitments and the completion of the peace process. Then the dissolution of the PLO would be possible with the proclamation of the state of Palestine."

Speaking of Palestinian-Syrian relations, Abu-Mazin said: "Unfortunately, these relations are not normal and there is some tension and estrangement between the two sides. We hope, however, that this state of affairs will end soon."

As to the so-called "Palestinian Golan," Abu-Mazin pointed out that "there is no need to talk about this matter at present, although it does exist. This is a matter that concerns us and the Syrians, who are demanding the return of all the territories occupied before 1967. Once the Israeli withdrawal from these territories is completed, we would not have any conflicts with the Syrians."

With regard to the option of a confederation with Jordan Abu-Mazin said: "In principle, we have not changed our position. We still maintain that the creation of a confederation between the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples should come as a result of a free and voluntary choice. Our relations with Jordan are in constant growth."

Abu-Mazin praised the Palestinian elections which took place last month and said: "Some members of the Islamic Jihad Movement tried to prevent people from going to the polling booths. But the masses' participation surpassed all expectations." He said that "the Palestinian opposition has been losing day by day because it still lives in the past."

He said that the most important thing the elections achieved was "changing revolutionary legitimacy into a constitutional legitimacy. Furthermore, the elections constitute one of the two pillars for the completion of the transitional stage alongside the Israeli redeployment operation."

Asked if Fatah's domination of the elected council will enable the opposition to practice its role, Abu-Mazin said: "Quite frequently, the opposition comes

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from within the ranks of Fatah itself before any other side. As to the opposition forces, their behavior leads only to the shrinking of their role, a matter which causes a great deal of regret."

Asked about the possible holding of a dialogue with the opposition groups abroad, akin to the dialogue that was held with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Abu-Mazin replied: "We are always ready for dialogue. But they — the opposition — are unfortunately in a position that does not permit them to enter into a dialogue."

Asked if the Lebanese authorities are capable of protecting the Palestinians in the camps following the withdrawal of the weapons from these Palestinians, Abu-Mazin replied: "The situation in Lebanon has changed. The Lebanese state is now seeking to assert its sovereignty and has been demanding the imposition of its domination on all its territories. We must help it as much as we can to impose its sovereignty and to take control of security matters in every part of its territory."

Commenting on the likelihood of the holding of the final-stage negotiations in Cairo, Abu-Mazin said: "They do not necessarily have to be held in Cairo. It is also very likely that they could be held inside the homeland. However, there is complete coordination between us and the Egyptian officials. A joint Egyptian-Palestinian committee exists for following bilateral coordination between the two sides in all fields."

Palestinian Affairs: al-Za'nun—Legislative Council To Meet Early Mar

JN1302085796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim al-Za'nun, acting Palestine National Council speaker, said that the Legislative Council will hold its first session early next month. Al-Za'nun said that following the election of the council's speaker, two deputies, and a secretary, President 'Arafat will grant a maximum period of five weeks for the formation of the government.

Palestinian Affairs: Differences Reported Among Opposition Factions

JN1202201296 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Damascus correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharp differences erupted and shouts of anger and mutual accusations rose among representatives of the 10 Palestinian factions [opposed to the peace process] who met in Damascus on 4 February to discuss the results of the Palestinian elections, the attempts to amend the Palestinian National Charter, and the return of the Palestine National Council [PNC] members to the territories.

The 10 factions unanimously agreed to firmly oppose amending the National Charter, which is considered an extremely important national reference. However, differences erupted among the participants over other topics. The attendees were: Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah, from the Islamic Jihad; 'Isam al-Qadi, from al-Sa'iqah [Popular Liberation War Vanguards Organization]; Khalid 'Abd-al-Majid, from the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front; 'Arabi 'Awwad, from the Palestinian Revolutionary Communist Party; Abu-Nidal al-Ashqar, from the Palestine Liberation Front; Abu-Khalid al-'Amlah, from Fatah-the Uprising; Abu-'Ali Mustafa, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP]; Dr. Talal Naji, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command; Abu-Layla [Qays al-Samarra'i], from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP]; and Abu-Muhammad Mustafa, from Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement].

According to the minutes of the meeting, which were obtained by AL-MAJD's correspondent in Damascus, the differences became more heated and turned into a shouting match when Abu-Layla accused Hamas of participating in voting during the Palestinian elections, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Abu-Layla said: This is why the turnout was higher than expected.

Abu-Muhammad Mustafa defended the position of Hamas and defied Abu-Layla to prove that Hamas violated its announced decision to boycott the elections in terms of nominating candidates and voting. He then criticized the DFLP's positions and Hawatimah's statements. He said: It seems that some believe the best self-defense is to assail others. Criticizing the PFLP, he said: Why do you not call to account the organizations that nominated some of their leaders in the territories for elections? So far, no punitive measures have been taken against these organizations. Do you want to blame Hamas for your own mistakes?

Ramadan 'Abdallah bitterly talked about the situation of the Palestinian opposition and launched a lightning attack on its fragile alliance and its feeble performance. He then walked out of the meeting and left his seat to Abu-Ahmad 'Isam, one of his aides.

Abu-Khalid al-'Amlah began his remarks by assailing Hawatimah's recent statements to the Israeli media, saying he considered them a form of rejected normalization and a channel of dialogue with Israeli circles. Al-'Amlah then wondered angrily: Why is Hawatimah eager to return to the self-rule areas, knowing that he is not a Palestinian or a PNC member?

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The meeting's minutes show complex differences and a long dialogue on the convening of the PNC and the opportunities for some PNC members to return home. Al-'Amlah called for boycotting the PNC's coming session and considering it an illegitimate session. He also rejected the conditional return home, which is confined to the PNC members. However, Abu-'Ali Mustafa and Abu-Layla emphasized that returning home is a right that should be exercised and that this opportunity should be exploited.

Afterward, a long dialogue was held on the alternative national terms of reference for the PNC and the PLO. However, the tense atmosphere of discussions, the escalating differences, and the absence of five secretaries general — Habash, Hawatimah, Jibril, Abu-Musa [Sa'id Musa Muragha]; and Abu-Marzuq [head of Hamas Political Bureau] — necessitated planning another meeting for 17 February to resume the dialogue on the situation of the Alliance of Palestinian Forces and specify alternative national terms of reference.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP's Habash on Charter, Military Action

JN1302114196 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 22

[Interview with PFLP Secretary General Dr. George Habash by Kamal Zakarinah; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Zakarinah] There have been reports about your possible abandonment of political action and residence in Jordan. How true are these reports?

[Habash] This question is nothing new. I have repeatedly answered this question, which was posed to me several times by the newspaper AL-DUSTUR. I would like to reiterate my answer. I am not at all entertaining the notion of abandoning political action. In this regard, I am differentiating between holding the post of secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and political action. I will remain engaged in political action as long as the Palestinian people's question remains unresolved, and as long as the causes I championed on the Arab level, chief among which is the achievement of Arab unity, are yet to become realities. My engagement in political action has never been contingent on my holding a leadership or government post. Rather, it has always been connected to the cause of displaced and exiled Palestinians, who are determinedly and persistently struggling to liberate their territories and to defeat the Zionist enemy regardless of the intractable circumstances and difficulties facing them. I am just a man belonging to this matchless and persevering people. I will continue to make sacrifices in the midst of my people until our dream of living in a free and independent Palestine comes true.

[Zakarinah] Will the situation of the Syria-based Palestinian opposition factions be adversely affected if a real breakthrough is achieved on the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations?

[Habash] The question is hypothetical. It anticipates developments and events. I believe that this track continues to face formidable complications and obstacles. Even if a Syrian-Israeli agreement is reached, I do not think to the restoration of Arab rights in full to their lawful owners. This entails an endorsement of the legitimate national Palestinian struggle to regain Palestinian rights. The Syrian leadership's position in this regard is declared and has become public knowledge. In the course of its pursuit of the current peace process, the Syrian leadership has reiterated its adherence to these principles.

It is useful to note that we within the PFLP have not confined our political and organizational presence to one arena. We have our political, mass, and organizational extensions in Lebanon, Jordan, the occupied homeland, and the diaspora. Since the eruption of the glorious Palestinian intifadah in the occupied homeland, we have pursued a serious policy aimed at moving the PFLP's center of gravity to the occupied homeland, which is the major arena. We have made tangible moves and decisions to reflect this approach at the fifth national congress. We will constantly seek to promote this approach now and in the future. [passage omitted]

[Zakarinah] When and how will you return to the homeland?

[Habash] My return to the homeland is not a personal matter. It is linked to the repatriation of my displaced people. At any rate, it is up to the PFLP leadership echelons to decide on this issue. I will comply with whatever they decide in this regard. I am well aware that the PFLP leadership echelons understand my exceptional situation. Consequently, I rule out the possibility that they would force me to implement a decision in this regard.

[Zakarinah] Given the current international and regional changes, what is your attitude toward amending the [Palestinian] National Charter?

[Habash] We within the PFLP are definitely against amending the Palestinian National Charter. The PFLP Political Bureau made a decision in this regard at its most recent session. This is because the proposed amendment is not aimed at revoking the clauses that call for the destruction of Israel, but rather at revoking the clauses that reiterate the Palestinian people's historical

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claims to Palestine and recognizing the existence of Israel, which is an expansionist and settler entity bent on uprooting the Palestinian people.

We are meant to endorse a sell-out of Palestine, disavow all our struggles, and close the door to any effort to liberate usurped Palestine by future generations. We will not accept this. We do not have the right to do so, nor does any leader, party, or authority for that matter.

International and regional changes, which are definitely not in our favor, cannot make us abandon our legitimate and historical rights. Nor can they make us resign ourselves to the rule of an occupation force or legitimize this rule. It is worth noting that our national struggle does not contravene international legitimacy and UN resolutions, which support our rights to statehood, repatriation, and self-determination. We are not asking for more than this. [passage omitted]

[Zakarinah] What is your position toward the convening of a Palestine National Council [PNC] session in the territories?

[Habash] We have always advocated the convening of PNC sessions. It was 'Arafat who obstructed the convening of such sessions over the past five years. Whether the next PNC session is held inside or outside the territories is immaterial to us. But, we object to the next PNC session being exclusively devoted to amending the charter. We are against an invitation that sets charter amendment as the only topic on the agenda. We within the PFLP support the convening of an ordinary PNC session that has a full agenda to evaluate the Palestinian policy in the past phase. Such a session must draw up the policy outlines of the upcoming stage based on national constants, chief among which are repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. [passage omitted]

[Zakarinah] Why has your military activity in Lebanon seen an ebb even though you are not committed to the current peace process and opposed to the Palestinian-Israeli agreements?

[Habash] The decline in our military activity in Lebanon was caused by objective reasons related to developments on the Lebanese scene since the signing of the al-Ta'if accord. Since then, the Lebanese Government has begun to beleaguer the armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon within the confines of Palestinian camps. It goes without saying that this has created formidable difficulties and complications in the face of our activities. Notwithstanding all this, we are doing our utmost, in coordination with our Palestinian and Lebanese allies, to reach the enemy and attack its military positions.

Palestinian Affairs: Jibril—Struggle Will Continue Without Syria

NC1202200796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command [PFLP—GC], has stressed that the PFLP-GC will remain steadfast in the face of the Zionist entity. He said: It is our legitimate and sacred right to stand up to the Zionist occupiers. He said: We will use all available resources and means to confront the enemy and liberate the Palestinian land from the Zionist occupiers.

Jibril emphasized that the PFLP—GC will continue its struggle until the Palestinian land is liberated, even if Syria and all the Arab regimes sign a peace agreement with the Zionists. He expressed his rejection of the Oslo agreement and all other agreements that ignored the Palestinian people's inalienable rights. He said that his front will use all resources to foil these agreements.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Reportedly Detaining 60 Policemen

TA1302114396 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 13 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Hagay Huberman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Palestinian Authority [PA] has placed all the Palestinian policemen (about 60) who arrived from Libya about two weeks ago under arrest until those members of Abu-Nidal's [Sabri al-Banna] group who infiltrated along with them in an attempt to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat are found.

This was conveyed by senior PA officials to the Israeli defense establishment. Nevertheless, Israel has received no confirmation of this report from other sources. [passage omitted]

At the same time, with Egypt's approval, the Palestinians have been checking out the 250 policemen who are still awaiting entry to the Gaza Strip on the Egyptian side of Rafah in order to ascertain that the two terrorists are not among them.

Defense sources told our correspondent that the issue engenders cooperation between Israel and the PLO, as Israel's refusal to allow the policemen entry enabled the Palestinians to conduct stricter checks before they enter the Gaza Strip.

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Christopher Credited With 'Initial Agreement' on Golan

MM1202140396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Salih Qallab: "Initial Agreement Between Damascus and Tel Aviv Achieved by Christopher; Syria To Obtain al-Himmah in the South, Israel To Withdraw to International Borders in the North"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Informed diplomatic sources in Amman have revealed that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher managed during his recent tour of the region to secure an initial Syrian-Israeli agreement over outstanding issues between the two countries, most notably Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

The sources said that the agreement stipulates that Israel should withdraw from the Golan Heights to the international borders, namely the borders drawn by the British and French during their occupation of Palestine and Syria after World War I, to the north and the 4 June [1967] lines in the areas known as Palestinian al-Himmah and Syrian al-Himmah [to the south].

The agreement means that the Syrians will have no foothold on Lake Tiberias or anywhere on its eastern bank. In return, the Israelis will withdraw from the small triangle in the contact point [nuqtat al-tamas] at the Palestinian-Jordanian-Syrian borders, whose area totals about 60 square km and which contains Syrian al-Himmah and Palestinian al-Himmah.

There have been reports that the Palestinians could join the Syrian-Israeli negotiations at a later stage, because they believe that UN Resolution 242, which stressed the need for Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967, applies also to the so-called Palestinian Golan, namely the strip adjacent to Lake Tiberias to the east, whose area totals about 60 square km and which includes the so-called Palestinian al-Himmah.

This information indicates that the difficulty of incorporating this area into the Palestinian self-rule area, for geographical and political reasons, could open the door to compensating the Palestinians financially on the basis of a formula to be decided by an international panel that could be formed to this end in the future.

According to the sources, the Israelis made it a condition — in return for what they regard as a big concession — that Syria must pledge not to touch the sources of any of the streams and small rivers which are considered tributary streams of the River Jordan and which originate in the hills of Jabal al-Shaykh and run into Lake Tiberias.

As is known, Israel has for some 30 years been using Lake Tiberias as a natural reservoir for the waters emanating from the Golan Heights and the hills of Jabal al-Shaykh and some Lebanese areas. It relies on this reservoir in irrigating the Negev areas in the south, which have been transformed from desert areas into the most important agricultural area in Israel.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Palestinians, Israelis To Discuss Refugees

NC1302103896 Cairo MENA in English 0920 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 13 (MENA)—The Palestinian and Israeli delegations to the meetings of the Quadrilateral Technical Committee on Palestinian Refugees issue, arrived here early this morning.

The committee is to discuss during its meeting today procedures for the return of Palestinian refugees since the 1967 war.

The conferees will review Palestinian and Israeli viewpoints on definition of a refugee and the outcome of the committee's Haifa meeting held last month.

Delegations representing Egypt and Jordan participate in the meetings of the committee.

Arab-Israeli Talks: PA-Israel Rafah Airport Dispute Settled

TA1202180796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The dispute between Israel and the Palestinians on the establishment of an airport at Rafah has been resolved. A senior Palestinian Authority [PA] source told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the dispute was resolved in a secret meeting between PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories, and the Southern Command' Maj. Gen. Sha'ul Mufaz.

It was agreed in the meeting that Israel would permit the Palestinians to continue the work until May and that if there are disputes they will be put on the negotiating table. The Palestinians also undertook not to deploy policemen in Zone B, the rural area, without prior coordination with Israel.

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Arab-Israeli Talks: 1st Israel-Jordan-PA Economic Meeting Scheduled

TA1302055896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A trilateral economic meeting — the first of its kind — between Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian Authority [PA] representatives will take place within a month. This was decided last night at a meeting Israel's Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir and Finance Ministry Director General David Brodet held with their counterparts in Amman. This morning, Savir will confer with Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan and with the new Prime Minister al-Kabariti, our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports.

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Algeria

Algeria: Car Bomb Attack Attributed to GIA

LD1202174296 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 1451 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two private Algerian newspapers were not published on today because of the damage caused yesterday by a bloody car bomb attack against the press house in Algiers.

The latest toll of the attack is 18 dead and 54 injured. Among the casualties — most of them were passersby — are three journalists, including the editor-in-chief of the popular daily newspaper, LE SOIR.

The front cover of LE MATIN and L'OPINION were published today by the other private dailies.

The attack has been attributed to the GIA [Armed Islamic Group].

Algeria: Algiers Bomb Toll—17 Killed, 52 Wounded

LD1202151596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] According the initial reports, 17 people were killed and 52 others were injured in today's second car bomb in Algiers. The car went off this afternoon at the top end of Hassiba Benbouali avenue, near the Tahar Djaout Press House. Our correspondent on the spot has told us that the explosion took place near the offices of the daily LE SOIR D'ALGERIE. The offices were destroyed. The explosion also damaged neighboring buildings and tower blocks.

Following the explosion, the head of government Ahmed Ouyahia, who was accompanied by the ministers of interior, health, communication and cultures, went to the location of the explosion.

The head of government was shocked to see the damage left by the criminal attack and witnessed for himself the work of emergency service, the security services and medics. Afterward, he went to Mustapha Bacha university hospital to visit the wounded. [passage omitted]

Algeria: 5,000 March in Protest of Bombings

LD1202152396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The same horror [recent car bomb explosions] was felt by all Algerians. Thus 5,000 people took to the streets yesterday at Ain Bessem, in the province of Bouira. The march was also held in reaction to the car bomb attack which targeted Ain Bessem Hospital [on 5 February]. The toll in that attack was a heavy one also — five dead and 22 injured.

Algeria: Security Forces Kill 22 'Criminals'

LD1202162596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services said that the security forces killed 22 criminals in various operations they carried out in the provinces of Bouira, Tipaza, Relizane, Setif, the capital Algiers, Blida, and Constantine. The statement added that during these operations the security forces also managed to recover a quantity of arms and military ammunition.

Algeria: Workers Strike To Protest Government Decision

LD1302104996 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Workers are staging a two-day strike today following the call made by the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA], the main trade union. The decision was made as a protest by the UGTA's national secretariat at a recent meeting when it discussed the head of government's decision to make deductions from employees' wages.

Algeria: UGTA Secretary General Justifies Strike Call

LD1202213096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA] will carry out its threat to call for two days of strikes tomorrow and the day after [13 and 14 February] to protest the prime minister's decision to make deductions from worker's salaries to resolve the issue of unpaid wages. UGTA Secretary General Abdelhak Benhamouda is interviewed by Mohand Ridaoui:

[Begin Benhamouda recording] For us, the prime minister's decision is unjust and contemptible. The National Secretariat [of the UGTA], in consultation with union federations, decided to retaliate and say that this decision is neither acceptable nor just. The two days of strike will be held to demand the withdrawal of this decision. If the decision is not withdrawn, then other action will be called for by the union movement. [end recording]

Algeria: FIS Denies Haddam Represents FIS Institutions

MM1202152396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Feb 96 pp 1,4

[Unattributed report: "Islamic Salvation Front Violently Attacks Haddam; Reports of Decision To Arrest Him"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London and Algiers, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — In a statement signed by its

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executive committee abroad, the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] has announced that Anouar Haddam, head of its parliamentary delegation abroad currently residing in Washington, does not represent any of the FIS institutions. A written statement, of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT received a copy yesterday, said that Haddam has nothing to do with the FIS and has neither political presence nor influence in Algeria or abroad. Meanwhile, informed sources in Algeria have said that Haddam is wanted by justice and will be arrested if he returns to Algeria. The sources said that his proposal to hold a dialogue between the government and opposition has nothing to do with the situation.

The FIS statement said that the FIS expresses its responsible political positions through its legal and representative institutions, which are as follows:

1. The detained shaykhs, namely Abassi Madani, Ali Belhadj, and Abdelkader Hachani.
2. The freed shaykhs Ali Djedi, Abdelkader Boukhamkham, Kemal Kamazi, and Abdelkader Omar.
3. The Islamic Salvation Army leadership, under Shaykh Madani Mezrak's leadership.
4. The Executive Committee abroad, led by Shaykh Rabah Kebir.

The text of the statement clearly stated that Anouar Haddam does not represent any of these institutions, and hence his statements and positions are only personal positions, in addition to the fact that he does not enjoy any political presence or influence in the country or abroad.

The statement added that this farce yet again reveals personal designs that have nothing to do with either the interests of the FIS or those of the Algerian people, and which follow narrow schemes detrimental to the reputations of their organizers and those participating in them.

In conclusion, the statement said that the FIS announces its commitment to finding a comprehensive political solution to the crisis in line with the positions expressed in the shaykhs' letters to the presidency and through the institutions mentioned earlier. [Passage omitted]

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS1302113496 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 6 Feb 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe" — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Editorial

Where are the Generals driving Algeria to?!

Praise be to Allah,

In this period of History, there seems to be two directions left for a country like Algeria to take or to be forced to take.

A direction which constitutes a faithful continuation of the past three decades or so characterised by an eternal status-quo in the "content" of the situation while its "appearance" are periodically "redecorated". The fatal destination in the above direction does not seem to bother those from the military who have imposed themselves by force to unilaterally decide on the future of Algeria. This cast of people do not bother about the state of the economy as long as the "security side" is "secured" enough for them to perpetuate their monopolistic gripe on power. Their economical programs if they can be called so are all based on one principle "hard currency greediness by all means" including literally selling the country and "prostituting it, its environment and its people" in such processes as the actual "anarchic liberalisation and privatisation" and the coming "savage development of tourism" which the Algerian people in general will not benefit from it directly or indirectly. This road under these conditions of darkness where only the same few military Generals dictate and control the orientation of the country, can only be a prelude to misery and far more violence on the top of what it has already been reached in terms of insecurity, unemployment,corruption, illiteracy...

The other direction is through the "door" leading to real and comprehensive development. A development which emanates from the concerned people and comes back to them for adjustment a correction and then goes back once more to their environment and comes back again... This kind of perpetual dynamics has unfortunately been blocked by the suppression of freedom of expression and the policy of political exclusion dictated by the selfishness of the few who wants to retain the monopoly over decisions vital to the future of the country and the people. The actual battle is between forces who are trying to close that "door" further and those who are trying to open it wider!

Today, the military regime in Algeria has staged the elections of Gen. Zeroual which were supposed to be a first step toward the "(re)-establishing of the Algerian people sovereignty over Algeria". Unfortunately the

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regime has taking it as a final destination and more importantly has changed its reading to that of: "the Algerian people have given their blessing and total adhesion to Gen. Zeroual electoral program (which in fact was rather an amalgamation of empty political slogans of a demagogical nature)". So in practice, the regime is interpreting the elections of Gen. Zeroual as a given "green light" for the "General" to "drive Algeria" to wherever destination he sees fit.

Last week and during its mid-January meeting, the EEC working group on the Maghreb has examined once more the Algerian regime demand for a status of EEC associate as the one already attributed to Morocco and Tunisia. The EEC decided to start discussions on the subject in September while in March, the form and content of a mandate of negotiation to be given to the above group will be defined by the EEC. The military regime propaganda machine presented this piece of news as some kind a personal gesture by the French foreign Minister to "push" the EEC to open its door to the regime. Some may think that it was a rewarding gift to the sudden conversion of the "military General" to a "military democrat". Other observers were quick to ask where the French declarations such as "the elections of 16/10/95 constitute a first step toward democracy in Algeria" and "the French economical aid is from now on related to the progress of democratisation in Algeria", have gone. But this is another...petrochemical...issue!

It seems evident now that the regime is going to held legislative elections before the EEC meeting on Algeria next September. Elections which the "what and how" are known only to the Military regime which is itself waiting for some important political parties congresses. This did not stop the regime to have already started its electoral campaign of an identical bloody type like its last electoral campaign. Violence with obvious electoral objectives has come back stronger to the scene while general violence aimed at justifying the reinstalling of the curfew after Ramadhan, is also in the increase.

State terrorism or the institutionalising of political blackmail!

At the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadhan, an old women was working her garden with her daughter in the village of Kanoua (department of Skikda) situated in the North-East of Algeria, when a hooded man suddenly appeared. The old women asked him what he wanted, he said:"I came to kill you!". She replied to him: "then do it!" Without hesitation he shot her in the head. The old women was killed instantly in front of her daughter and some neighbours who were working on their gardens and who saw the assassin disappear in the wood.

Few hundred meters away from the scene of the crime, a Junta commander of the army detachment which was located in the vicinity, gave orders for the old women not to be removed and forbade her family to do so. The body of the old women stayed there until the day after. There are thousands of same cases where parents are forced to watch their assassinated relatives in the middle of the road, or in the field or even in dustbins. When the family is authorised to take their assassinated relatives, they are told not to take more than a handful of people to the funeral.

As for the old women, it happen that she was Sheikh Rabah Kebir's paternal aunt. The president of the FIS executive committed overseas has also had his uncle assassinated at one of Junta roadblocks exactly two years ago just because his name was Kebir. Last year the Junta has also dynamited his parents home.

This last assassination came at the time when Shaykh Rabah Kebir has denounced and rejected the letter sent to the military regime by a group of ex-FIS members who did not even disclose their names. In the alleged letter which was given a high dosage of coverage in the regime monopolistic media in contrast with the authentic FIS representatives in Algeria such as Shaykh Ali Djedi, Abdelkader Boukhamkham, Kamel Guemazi, Abdelkader Omar and Nouredine Chikara who are deprived from their political rights and banned to make any public declarations.

All these terrorist methods from a regime which future is definitely incompatible with that of a prosper Algeria in peace with itself, are just an unnecessary diversions which are not taken at all into consideration by the stubborn march of the "train of History". Trying to "fabricate" another FIS or substituting its legitimate leadership has never and will never work because the FIS is first of all a political party which came to concretises aspirations of a large parte of the Algerian people before being a party of individuals.

Egypt

Egypt: 'Arafat Telephones Musa on Airport Negotiations

NC1202222096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2150 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 12 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa held a telephone conversation this evening. A Palestinian source said that President 'Arafat explained to Musa the problem of the airport that will be built near Rafah. He noted that a solution was reached with the Israeli party at a meeting last

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night between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. This is the second telephone contact between 'Arafat and Musa in the past few hours to solve this problem.

Egypt: Under Secretary al-Baz on VP Post, System

NC1202163996 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 8 Feb 96 p 1, 6

[Report by Zakariya Fikri]

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first foreign ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, affirmed that President Husni Mubarak does not wish to deny the people's right to choose a vice president. Dr. al-Baz said that a vice president has not yet been chosen in order to give the largest number of competent and qualified Egyptians an opportunity to occupy this post. Dr. al-Baz added that the people will have the final say in choosing the most competent person for the post.

Dr. al-Baz maintained that the president has so far not chosen a vice president because he does not want to impose anyone on the people. There is no constitutional vacuum due to the absence of the vice president post.

Responding to demands that the president give up his chairmanship of the National Democratic Party [NDP], al-Baz stressed the need for the rule in Egypt to enjoy a political base. Should President Mubarak relinquish his post as the NDP leader, there would be no political base, he added.

Dr. al-Baz made these remarks during his meeting with professors and students of Alexandria University Law College two days ago. Replying to their questions, he dismissed remarks describing Egypt's regime as military and comments that most of the state's posts are occupied by the military.

Al-Baz stressed that Egyptian Government system is based on civilian and constitutional powers, not on the basis of the military establishment. He noted that former U.S. President Eisenhower had been in the military. He asked: Does this mean that the U.S. Government system during his presidency was a military one?

Egypt: Discord Said To Threaten Muslim Brotherhood's Future

MM1302111396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Muhammad Salah: "Disagreements Threaten Future of Brotherhood Group in Egypt"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — Informed sources from the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group in Egypt revealed yesterday that serious disagreements have erupted recently among the group's leaders, threatening its existence and future.

The sources believe that the disagreements are more serious than all the measures taken by the Egyptian Government against the group over the past two years.

The sources told AL-HAYAH that the disagreements erupted after a large number of the group's leaders and members objected to the way in which the current guide of the group, Mustafa Mashhur, was chosen as leader, stressing that allegiance was pledged to Mashhur in a manner that contravened the group's regulations and was a big surprise to members of the Guidance Bureau themselves.

Thousands of group members pledged allegiance to Mashhur last month at the Madinat al-Nasr cemetery during the burial of the late Guide Hamid Abu-al-Nasr. [passage omitted]

Libya

Libya: Retrial Ends in Death Sentence for Rebel Officers

MM1202154196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 10 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Libya: Death Sentences Passed on 12 Officers]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — Libyan opposition sources said yesterday that a Libyan military court has passed death sentences on 12 officers who participated in the "uprising" that took place on 5 October 1993 in the Bin Walid area, west of Tripoli.

The sources named the officers in question as follows: Colonel Miftah Qarrum, Col. Mustafa Bilqasim, Lieutenant Colonel Ishtawi Miftah al-Mabru, Lt. Col. Daw-al-Salihin, Major Khalil al-Jadak, Maj.Ramadan al-'Ayhuri, Major 'Abd-allah al-Wa'ir, Lt. Col. Muhammad al-Ghul, Maj. Miftah Bahr, Lt. Col. Muhammad Bashir Salih, Maj. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Wa'ir, Captain Salim Daynun al-Wa'ir (sentenced in absentia).

A military court previously sentenced seven of these officers to life and five to 10 years in prison. But the regime "did not like" these sentences, according to the opposition, so the president of the court, Brigadier al-'Isawi, was dismissed and replaced in the second trial, which began last December, by his deputy, Col. Misbah al-'Arusi, under whom the court pannel passed the death sentences.

As is known, the Bin Walid area witnessed an armed rebellion in the fall of 1993, and Libyan authorities managed to bring the situation under control, arresting

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a group of officers, who were referred to the court recently.

Mauritania

Mauritanian Government Reshuffles Ministers

LD1302000396 Paris Radio France International in French 2130 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Mauritania, there has been a cabinet reshuffle. The health minister has been appointed to head the Finance Ministry, and the former finance minister becomes minister of planning. The reshuffle was at the initiative of new Prime Minister Cheikh El Afia Ould Mohamed Khouna.

Morocco

Morocco: Drug Crackdown Implicates 'Senior Security Officials'

MM1202160096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 12 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Talhah Jibril: "Morocco Interrogates Security Officials Over Drug Smuggling"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rabat — AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned from well-informed sources that a number of senior security officials are being interrogated because of their possible involvement in Moroccan drug rings. The authorities are staging a large-scale campaign to dismantle these rings.

According to the sources, the officials in question belong to the police, gendarmerie, and customs. They also include some local government officials.

The sources say that the legal police is currently interrogating 25 high-ranking officials over information about their implication in direct or indirect work with drug smuggling rings.

The sources said yesterday that the main charge leveled at these officials is the facilitation of unobstructed transit of drugs by land and also the facilitation of the transporation of drugs by ship and sometimes by light plane outside ports and across Moroccan borders — a process known in the drugs world in Morocco as "route buying." [passage omitted]

Morocco: OMDH, Lawyers Criticize Antismuggling Drive

LD1202145096 Rabat MAP in English 1305 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Feb 12 (MAP) — The nationwide ongoing anti-smuggling campaign, launched late in December 95, particularly in Casablanca, (Morocco's economic capital), has so far enabled bringing 23 cases to the court of this city, involving 60 indicted people, 37 of whom have already tried. According to press reports, 35 customs agents are among the 60 indicted, 14 of whom have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from 8 months to 3 years. 17 other cases are being subject to further investigation at the request of the prosecution. 19 persons judged in 4 trials have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from 8 months to 5 years. They will also pay fines amounting to 67.5 billion dirhams (1 US dollar = 8./#). [as received]

This campaign has been criticized first by the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights (OMDH) and then by the Association of the Bars of Morocco, which voiced concern and "reserves" over what it described as "violation of the defense rights". In a press release, the association says the violation by authorities of the defense rights during the trials, "undermines the very grounds of a fair trial".

These remarks prompted the prosecution of the Casablanca Court to accuse, in a communique published Sunday evening, the lawyers association of "attempt to power", stating that the association press release bears "blatant contradictions and amalgam". The prosecution considers the fact that "these rulings be commented by those who are supposed to be the auxiliary of justice, constitutes a real attempt to power, to the inviolability of justice decisions that must be kept away from any influence whatever its nature and its origin".

The communique insists on the fact that the [word indistinct] for complaints regarding their clients have been examined by the national commission of struggle against smuggling and on the fact that most of the defendants that stood trial have fully enjoyed their rights.

On the other hand, the prosecution denied in another communique, the information recently published by the newspaper daily "AL ITTIHAD AL ICHTIRAKI" of the Socialist Party (USFP, opposition) alleging that the director general of the customs administration Ali Avo who will stand trial next March 7 in connection with this campaign, has been interrogated by the Minister of State for the Interior Driss Basri.

The prosecution voiced, in a clarification note sent to the daily, its determination to combat smuggling "this plague that threatens the Moroccan society, by lawfully suing all criminals so that they will be rendered harmless." The prosecution made it clear that it [words indistinct] anybody that will have contributed to encourage smuggling, even through the spread of false news, with

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the aim to hide truth and to mask the positive outcome reached by the investigation".

The director general of the customs department and his predecessor are accused of "complicity" and "non denunciation of fraud".

Sudan

Sudan: Ministry Wants Resident Egyptians To Register With Police

EA1202174596 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The committee, set up in accordance with decree numbers 98 and 95 issued by the interior minister and mandated to investigate the requests of the Ethiopian authorities to extradite the three Egyptians suspected of involvement in the attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, and who are believed to have infiltrated into Sudan, has issued a statement calling on all Egyptian nationals except those holding diplomatic passports to register their names at the police stations in their vicinity within 10 days from the date of issuance of this notice. The committee said that all Egyptian nationals leaving the country except those holding diplomatic passports would be vetted by passport authorities at airports, ports and border points.

Sudan: U.S. Said To Be Making 'Arrangements' Against Sudan

NC1302090296 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 9 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sudanese diplomatic sources told AL-SHA'B that the talks by David Shane, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East African affairs [name and title as published], with senior Sudanese officials did not include any threats to Sudan. He said the U.S. withdrew staff from the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum for security reasons.

The sources said the U.S. official was eager to emphasize that the withdrawal of the embassy staff, especially the ambassador, does not mean severing relations with Sudan or reducing the U.S. diplomatic mission in the country. It was merely a security measure to protect members of the embassy from potential threats. The ambassador will visit Khartoum intermittently to perform his duties while based in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Sudanese sources denied U.S. claims of threats to the embassy in Khartoum. They said: There is no security justification for the U.S. decision. It seems the Americans have information about things that will happen (in or against Sudan), and they do not want to be in the country at that time! This means U.S. (or at least U.S.-supported) arrangements are being made against the Khartoum government.

Discussing the unexpected visit by the U.S. official to Khartoum and the contradiction in the U.S. position, a Sudanese source said he believes the visit was a disguise for what is being planned, and that it was designed to give the impression that the Americans have no problems with Sudan. [passage omitted]

Sudan: OAU Official Arrives

EA1202183096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Organization of African Unity [OAU] deputy secretary general for political affairs, Mr. (Daniel Antonio), arrived in the country on 12 February on a visit to confirm the position of the Sudanese Foreign Ministry on tackling African problems in the African continent by seeking inspiration from its cultural and social heritage and keeping the doors of dialogue open.

In a briefing today, the Foreign Ministry expressed total readiness to cooperate with him and help make his mission a success with a view to helping the OAU become a model on ways tackling problems facing the people of the continent.

Sudan: Opposition Leader Sets Conditions for Meeting al-Turabi

MM1202155996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Uthman Mirghani in London and AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Khartoum: "Al-Mahdi Refuses To Meet With al-Turabi"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Informed Sudanese sources have revealed that Sadiq al-Mahdi, former premier and leader of the opposition Ummah party, has rejected a new proposal for reconciliation with the government and refused dialogue with Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, National Islamic Front secretary general, unless the dialogue is intended for "handing over power to the people without bloodshed."

Sources close to al-Mahdi have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that he received, via Haj Hamad al-Ja'li, a religious leader who brought him a letter from Dr. al-Turabi, a proposal for reconciliation with the government. The sources revealed that the oral message carried by Shaykh al-Ja'li included a request for a trilateral

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meeting to include al-Mahdi, al-Turabi, and Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, leader of the opposition National Democratic Grouping and the Democratic Unionist Party, with a view to discussing the possibility of reaching a political agreement to end the current political crisis and provide a way out of the deteriorating situation, especially with regard to the war in the south, the strained relations with neighboring states, and the prospect of sanctions to be imposed on Sudan following the recent UN Security Council resolution condemning it.

According to these sources al-Mahdi told the intermediary, Shaykh al-Ja'li, that past experience has shown that the government is not serious in its attempts to find a solution to the country's crisis through a dialogue which would result in restoring democracy, putting an end to the war in the south, and achieving peace. Al-Mahdi also added that, whenever the regime has found itself in a tight spot, it has resorted to spreading rumors about reconciliation in order to confuse public opinion inside the country and abroad, and that the new talk of a desire for reconciliation can only be viewed in this context.

The former prime minister said that the general situation leads to the conclusion that the government has very few options, and that the only way out would be to find a way of handing over power and providing a peaceful solution, sparing the country bloodshed and increased burden. Al-Mahdi said that he does not wish to hold any meeting with Dr. al-Turabi or any of the regime's leaders, but that out of respect for Shaykh al-Ja'li's efforts and status, it is possible that he may agree to such a meeting if the only item on the agenda is finding a way of handing over power to the people, restoring democracy, and achieving peace.

Al-Mahdi pointed out that although he cannot speak for al-Mirghani, he feels that he (al-Mirghani) and the other Sudanese political leaders would not object if the meeting's only objective is to hand over power to the people without bloodshed. [passage omitted]

Sudan: 49 Candidates To Run for President

EA1202182596 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The chairman of the general electoral commission, 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Zayn al-Nahhas, on the morning of 12 February, announced the provisional list of presidential candidates, who number 49. During a news conference held today at the commission's headquarters, al-Nahhas declared that the list was provisional and could be challenged. He said eight people had been rejected by the commission for being lax with information pertaining to their lists of supporters. [passage omitted]

Mr. al-Nahhas said a delegation from the UN had already arrived to monitor the elections and that several Arab League and Organization of African Unity states had also responded positively. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Provincial Official Denies Slave-Trading Charges

EA1202220396 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1525 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 12 Feb (SUNA) — The secretary of Buram Rural, Mr. Kafi (Tayyar al-Badin), has denied Western media allegations of human rights violations and slave-trading in the Nubah mountains. Mr. Kafi stressed that the rebel movement, under the leadership of Yusuf Kuwah, was the one abducting women and children and perpetrating inhuman acts against those refusing to join it. He stressed that there was security and peace in the area, thanks to the National Salvation Revolution.

The executive director of Buram Rural, Mr. Abu-al-Qasim Ahmad Adam, also condemned the conspiracies being hatched by Western circles against Sudan. He said Buram Rural had witnessed the return of over 70,000 citizens from the rebel movement and who are now participating in development activities in the area.

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Bahrain

Bahraini Opposition Denies Responsibility for Hotel Blast

NC1202194296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with IFLB spokesman Karim al-Mahrus by Mahdi Hasan;-place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Mr. Karim al-Mahrus, the Bahraini Government accused the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain [IFLB] of being behind the explosion at the Diplomat Hotel. What is your reply to this accusation?

[Al-Mahrus] These accusations are unsound and we categorically reject them. We consider this type of explosions as clearly staged, showing that the government prepared for it and carried it out. We expected that the Bahraini Government had two options after the explosion: Either to launch a large arrest campaign, or accuse one of the opposition parties. The Bahraini Government indeed began by accusing the IFLB of planning this explosion. Afterwards, it also resorted to the second option, launching an arrest campaign in several areas of Bahrain, especially in Manama.

[Hasan] Do you have evidence proving that the Bahraini Government is behind this explosion?

[Al-Mahrus] Yes. Certainly, our means of communication and the way we explain our actions are well known. We have contacts with numerous news agencies and we are frank in all our practices. For instance, when an incident takes place in Bahrain we explain it to these agencies. These agencies know us and contact us by telephone or in other ways. It is not our custom to contact anyone without first identifying ourselves. When we want to embark on a peaceful move, we are not afraid of being frank or declaring what we do. However, this type of action is clearly shows that the government carried it out. The government contacted some news agencies as soon as the explosion took place and claimed that the IFLB was behind it.

[Hasan] Should this incident be exposed, it would harm the government, correct?

[Al-Mahrus] Certainly, because the government has no options and all doors are closed. International opinion has begun to put pressure on the Bahraini Government, forcing it to withdraw forces from streets, release detainees, or bring them to court if there are any charges. The Bahraini Government could not keep the situation as it was and resorted to justifications, such as accusing the opposition, especially the IFLB of such acts.

[Hasan] You still endorse the peaceful option to achieve the Bahraini people's demands. Is this true?

[Al-Mahrus] Yes, we insist on peaceful options. All our statements assert this position. However, the government is involved in violence and it must realize the present and future of Bahrain. In the past few years, Bahrain experienced more than 15 incidents, and all called for establishing democracy, security, peace, and freedom in Bahrain. The government, however, closed all doors before the people. Consequently, this would cause some small groups to resort to options that may have grave consequences. These options may me out of the control of the government and other opposition parties.

Bahrain: Press Comments on Hotel Explosion

JN1302093196 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0527 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 13 Feb (WAKH) — The newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says the real aims and evil goals of the rioters and saboteurs and the foreign quarters instigating or colluding with them are no longer a secret to all inside and outside the country.

It asserts that all are now aware of the fact that the saboteurs and those instigating them only aim at spreading chaos and destruction throughout the country and at destroying the country's accomplishments, economic installations, and the citizens' gains.

It says it is illogical to believe that those who set fire to electric power-generating stations, destroy traffic lights, or plant explosives in public places can have national goals or political demands. It adds that such acts are committed only by people who do not at all care for the country or the citizens. The saboteurs can only be obedient tools in the hands of a group that is involved in a terrorist scheme targeting the country and its security, stability, and economic future. It pains them to see Bahrain continue the march of economic development. Therefore, they do not hesitate to commit the ugliest of crimes to implement their subversive plans, unrestrained by religion or patriotic feelings. This was proven by their failure to respect even the sanctity of the blessed month of Ramadan when they continued their criminal actions, the latest of which was the terrorist criminal attack on the Diplomat Hotel.

The paper expresses confidence that all sectors and factions of the Bahraini people, who denounced the terrorist acts and emphasized their cohesion with their leadership in confronting this criminal scheme, are now fully aware of the aims of the terrorist groups who are hiding behind political slogans and whose false

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propaganda can no longer deceive anyone, especially after the exposure of their terrorist and criminal acts.

The newspaper AL-AYYAM says: Whenever a breakthrough loomed in the horizon and whenever matters began to return to normal after the recent incidents in Bahrain, the malicious factions made desperate attempts to assert themselves through all ways and means even if innocent people were killed.

It says the explosion of a percussion bomb in the Diplomat Hotel was a mere attempt to attract media attention to maintain an atmosphere of tension after the security bodies have gained full control over the security situation in the country. It adds: The terrorist groups which claimed responsibility for the explosion clearly exposed their true nature, which is based on violence and terrorism. They also revealed their real aims — striking at the country's economic interests and accomplishments.

The paper asserts that these groups, which hid behind political and social slogans, resorted to this method only to reveal beyond any doubt their links and schemes which aim at harming the country's security and threaten the stability of the entire region.

AL-AYYAM says the Diplomat Hotel incident constitutes a new stage of confrontation that allows for no appeasement, tolerance, or relinquishment of accomplishments. It is a stage of dealing firmly with those who want to stop the people's process of development and construction.

The paper adds: The saboteurs seek to maintain an atmosphere of tension to assert themselves and foreign parties have deliberately contributed to creating this atmosphere by embracing these groups of saboteurs and supporting them morally and materially without the slightest sense of responsibility. There are even states in the region whose main concern is to instigate others through their news media or facilitate the tasks of these terrorist groups.

AL-AYYAM says the incidents in Bahrain are security ones in the first place. This was confirmed by the confessions made by the defendants and was revealed by officials on several occasions. All indications point in this direction. The paper expresses surprise at the insistence of some news media on depicting these incidents differently and giving all sorts of justifications to these heinous acts.

The paper says that Bahrain is always eager to build its relations with others on constant principles from which it does not budge under any circumstances. It is against Bahrain's nature to launch media campaigns because it believes in the sanctity of the responsible word and its use for constructive rather than destructive and reckless purposes.

The paper continues: All indications show that these incidents, which are directed from abroad, are not targeting Bahrain only, but also the Gulf region as a whole. Some parties' complicity in inciting these incidents and embracing the perpetrators indicates a limited vision in comprehending the magnitude of the conspiracy and its dimensions and goals—a conspiracy whose links are widening every day.

The paper expresses confidence that these fabricated incidents and desperate attempts to sow chaos and fear in Bahrain are doomed to failure after the security bodies have succeeded in breaking up the links of the sabotage groups and foiling their schemes. Moreover, the paper adds, all factions of the Bahraini people are well aware of the aims of the tendentious and fierce campaigns launched against them by certain states and terrorist organizations. The matter is no longer a media war; it is animosity to this people and homeland.

Bahrain: GCC Chief Deplores Iranian 'Interference'

NC1202154396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1355 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu Dhabi, 12 Feb (MENA)—Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] Secretary General Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi voiced extreme concern that foreign parties continue to meddle in Bahrain's internal affairs, to provoke sedition in the ranks of the Bahraini people, and to impair their economic and urbane achievements with the aim of undermining security and stability throughout the Gulf region.

In a statement to the EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY, WAM, today, Shaykh al-Qasimi strongly deplored the distribution by the Iranian Embassy in Kuwait of a leaflet encouraging sedition and expressing support for a minority of saboteurs in Bahrain. He said this constitutes blatant interference in the internal affairs of a GCC member.

The GCC secretary general denounced the Iranian Embassy's unjustified conduct and said that the GCC countries reject any attempt to sow divisions in the region and undermine its stability. He affirmed that the GCC countries form one integral whole.

He called on Iran to respect the sovereignty of all the region's countries and refrain from meddling in their affairs or carrying out actions that are bound to harm its relations with them.

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Shaykh al-Qasimi said that the GCC countries wish to maintain good ties with Iran that are based on good neighborliness. He said that for this to happen, Iran must refrain from any form of intervention in other countries' internal affairs and must respect their sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, noting that this is necessary to develop relations between these countries and Iran and enhance stability in a region that is important to the entire world.

He urged Iran to implement its public wish to develop its relations with the GCC states in order to create a climate of assurance and mutual trust. He noted that if these relations develop in a natural manner, this will enhance security and stability in this vital region.

Bahrain: Opposition Group Calls For Strike

NC1202200996 Paris AFP in English
1919 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 12 (AFP) - One of Bahrain's main exiled opposition groups called Monday [12 February] for shops and businesses in the country to go on a five-day commercial strike in a protest against the government.

In a statement sent to AFP in Nicosia, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain urged a suspension of trading and also called for consumers to stop buying goods over the same period, from February 15 to 20. The group urged people to "demonstrate clearly their wish to proceed with comprehensive reforms and to defy this intransigent government supported by multinational forces." It was not clear, however, whether the call for a trade boycott extended to all goods or just luxury items.

The group's appeal came a day after two Bahrainis and a Sri Lankan were wounded when a home-made bomb exploded in a luxury hotel in the second such attack in the Gulf state in a month. Bahrain has been hit by political violence since the arrest in December 1994 of a Shiite Muslim cleric demanding the restoration of parliament, which was suspended in 1975. At least 13 people were killed in clashes between security forces and demonstrators. After a lull since April, fresh troubles erupted last December after the Sunni Muslim-led authorities banned political rallies in mosques.

Bahrain: Opposition Calls For Protest at End of Ramadan

NC1302135596 Paris AFP in English
1310 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 13 (AFP)—An opposition group called Tuesday [13 February] for Bahrainis not to celebrate the feast at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in protest at the government.

The exiled Bahrain Liberation Movement, in a statement sent to AFP, also called for a boycott of merchants who back the government.

Accusing the Sunni Muslim-led authorities of human rights abuses, it called for Bahrainis not to celebrate the feast of Al-Fitr which falls on February 19 or 20, depending on sightings of the moon.

Another opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain called Monday for shops and businesses to go on strike next week, from February 15 to 20.

Bahrain has been hit by political violence since the arrest in December 1994 of a Shiite Moslem cleric demanding the restoration of parliament, which was suspended in 1975.

Kuwait

Kuwait: SAIRI Chairman Interviewed on UN Resolution 986

LD1202235796 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic
2100 GMT 12 Feb 96

["Part" of studio interview with SAIRI Chairman Baqir al-Hakim by correspondent Majid al-Shatti; date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Shatti] Mr. Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI]. As we know, the ruling regime in Baghdad has always refused Resolution 986, regarding the sale of a part of Iraqi oil to spend its revenues on the Iraqi people to safeguard bread, food, and medicine for the Iraqi people. In your opinion, what are the motives that have made the Iraqi regime give in and accept this resolution, even though it had always rejected it before on the pretext that it violated Iraq's sovereignty. What is your opinion?

[Al-Hakim] When we look at the event behind the issuance of this resolution, we find out the reason behind the regime's refusal to accept it. The objective of issuing this resolution was based on a principal idea we proposed last year to the United Nations during our visit to Geneva. Then we followed it up with the United Nations in New York through delegations, messages, and talks. We were helped with this big job by some brothers, especially in Kuwait. The objective was to distinguish the embargo between the Iraqi people and the regime. The Iraqi people should not shoulder the regime's crime and the barbaric acts committed by the

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regime against the region's countries, especially Kuwait. It is more so if we notice that the Iraqi people are also suffering from a siege [hisar] imposed by the regime on the people. Therefore, there are two embargoes on the Iraqi people, one from the outside and one from the inside. As concerns the embargo we have proposed some ideas in order to distinguish between the people, so that the embargo is lifted from the Iraqi people, and the regime, so that the embargo continues on it. This resolution was issued on the basis of this idea. Therefore, this resolution is based on the idea of the money obtained by Iraq from selling oil that is the Iraqi people's and must be spent on the children of the Iraqi people. Since the regime is not qualified for conducting an act that suits the Iraqi people, because the Iraqi regime also imposes an embargo on the Iraqi people, the United Nations has put the issues of spending and purchasing under its supervision and monitoring to enable all Iraqis to reap the results and fruits of this money, so that this money does not reach the regime, which would use the money to buy weapons or rebuild its military installations or even re-create its security establishments or spend it for luxury, which the regime practices. This way of thinking is what made the regime reject this resolution, because the regime does not care about the children of the Iraqi people. It also practices the process of starving the children of the Iraqi people in various ways, including imposing austerity measures on the people without imposing any degree of austerity on its personal expenditures or activities. Therefore, the regime has always refused this resolution because it would not receive the money it wants to spend on its personal expenditures and conditions without paying attention whether the Iraqi people starve to death. This is the basis for the rejection of Resolution 986.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Mubarak 'Preempts' King Husayn's Saudi Trip

MM1302103496 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Mubarak 'Preempts' Husayn's Visit to Saudi Arabia by Stressing His Rejection of Husayn's Call for Federation in Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, Amman, Cairo, Jerusalem — King Husayn of Jordan began an official visit to Saudi Arabia yesterday, the first in more than five years. The aim is to consolidate reconciliation between Amman and Riyadh and to discuss the situation in Iraq. Jordanian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Hani Khalifah said that King Husayn was due to meet yesterday evening with Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, who is entrusted with running the Kingdom's affairs.

Official Saudi sources ruled out a meeting between the Saudi and Jordanian monarchs in Mecca, contrary to what Jordanian officials have announced.

An Arab diplomatic source has said that "Saudi Arabia is satisfied with the shift in the Jordanian position toward the Iraqi regime, and the Iraqi issue will be among the first topics that the Jordanian monarch is to discuss with Saudi officials."

Jordan no longer conceals its desire to change the regime in Baghdad, and it has not rejected the statements made recently by U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry on Washington's "cooperation" with Jordan and other states in the region to speed up the downfall of President Saddam Husayn's regime.

The diplomatic source stressed that "Saudi officials will renew their advice to Jordan, namely to refrain from calling for the establishment of a federal system in Iraq" after the Saddam Husayn regime is toppled.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak yesterday concluded a visit to Saudi Arabia before King Husayn's arrival. The aim was to preempt the Jordanian monarch's visit, since he [Mubarak] stressed during his talks with the Saudi leadership "the danger of the Jordanian call for the establishment of a federation in Iraq and its potential destructive effects on stability in the region."

Mubarak's talks also broached the Yemen-Eritrea dispute over Hanish island. He stressed the need for Eritrea to withdraw from the island and then seek international arbitration.

Immediately after his return to Cairo, Mubarak met with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, stressing the utmost interest Egypt is devoting to the dispute.

Saudi Arabia: Papers on Bahrain, Russian 'Crimes' in Chechnya

LD1302140396 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0304 GMT 13 FEB 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 13 Feb (SPA) — Under the headline "Bahrain's Security and the Gulf's Security," AL-MADINAH writes: The explosions that have disturbed the security and shaken the tranquillity of fraternal Bahrain are nothing but an exceptional and unusual event which is unusual not only in the state of Bahrain but in the whole Gulf region. However, if the explosions in Bahrain are exceptional and unusual then

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it is necessary to face up to them in an unusual and exceptional manner.

The daily reiterates that the causes of the explosion in Bahrain are not local, given the foreign fingerprints which were left behind. These fingerprints belong to foreign powers whose repeated interference is well documented. Given this state of affairs, it is therefore necessary that any counterattack against the schemers, perpetrators, and those who might benefit from such acts should be collective.

The daily points out that Bahrain's security, stability, and peace are part of the security, stability, and peace of the region as a whole and, therefore, any measures to counter the threats brought about by the explosions in fraternal Bahrain will be part of the efforts to counter threats to the region as a whole.

Furthermore, the daily states that the conspiracy against Bahrain is only one of the many conspiracies that have threatened and still are threatening the security of the Gulf.

The paper reiterates that the explosion at the hotel in the Bahraini capital will only strengthen the resolve of the Bahraini Government and people to face up to the conspiracy and will only prompt them to stick to their policies and the joint Gulf policies. Such explosions, the paper asserts, will not be a source for disquiet but a source for indignity toward those who planned and carried them out. They will not be a thorn in the side of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] but an element for solidarity among its peoples, as the sources and aims of the threats are the same for all GCC member states.

The paper concludes its editorial saying: Fraternal Bahrain will not be alone in countering such conspiracies against the security of the Gulf, for its brethren in the Gulf will be standing in the same trench to fight the enemy with determination and unwavering resolve and defeat all those who wanted to harm our Gulf region.

Under the headline: "What Is Going On in Chechnya?", AL-BILAD writes: It is regrettable and embarrassing for the world to stand back and watch the destiny of a sovereign people, the destiny of the Muslim people of Chechnya, being manipulated by the whims of the presidential elections in Russia.

The daily stresses that the crimes committed by the Russian forces against the Chechens are no worse than those committed by the Serbs against Bosnian Muslims. Both crimes, the paper adds, have one thing in common: a Russian hand — Russian support for the Serbs and Russian actions in Chechnya. [passage omitted]

The paper adds, however, that the Islamic world as a political bloc should at least try to challenge what is happening to the Muslims of Chechnya at international organizations by drawing attention to their problem at the United Nations or at the Organization of the Islamic Conference. They should exert concerted efforts to help the Chechen people in their daily struggle, given the very difficult circumstances which they have been facing. [passage omitted]

The daily urges Europe and the United States to play a role proportional to their international weight. They should urge Moscow to find realistic solutions to the Chechen problem, respect the legitimate rights of that country, and end its killing of innocent people and the destruction of their property.

The paper concludes by saying: In order that Chechnya should not become a second Afghanistan, Moscow should use logic and rethink its strategy.

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Iraq: UN Oil-for-Food Talks Adjourn for Consultations

JN1202153796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1505 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 12 Feb (INA)—Iraq and the United Nations will resume their official dialogue in New York today on oil for food and the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi and UN delegations adjourned their official public ['ammah] sessions to give experts from both delegations the opportunity to discuss the technical details of this issue, including oil marketing, trade, food, health, medicine, and the related financial arrangements.

An INA correspondent in New York said that both delegations will hold an official public session at 2300, Baghdad local time, [2000 GMT]. The session, in which all members of both delegations will take place, will deal with decisions reached by both parties' experts in their discussions.

Iraq: al-Anbari Optimistic as Oil-for-Food Talks Resume

JN1302115796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1023 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 13 Feb (INA)—The delegations of Iraq and the United Nations are to resume official dialogue at 1100 today, New York local time.

The two delegations held a three-hour official meeting yesterday to discuss the distribution of food and medicine.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, expressed optimism, and told journalists last night that the Iraqi delegation came to the UN headquarters determined to accomplish its mission.

He said that the two delegations would hold another meeting on Tuesday morning.

He added that the discussions tackled humanitarian supplies for the Iraqi people, and said that these supplies included food and medicine and that the two sides also focused on ways to implement the oil-for-food and medicine formula.

Iraq: Tariq 'Aziz on UN Embargo, Human Rights

BR0902164196 Brussels LE VIF-L'EXPRESS in French 9-15 February 96 p 51

[Interview with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz by unidentified correspondents; place and date not given: "Tariq 'Aziz: 'An Immense Injustice'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [LE VIF-L'EXPRESS] Iraq is often accused of deceiving the United Nations, in particular by concealing the components of chemical or biological weapons. Yet Saddam Husayn claims that he has renounced any act of aggression. Why this double talk?

['Aziz] Be careful, you must not get everything confused! You must be careful to distinguish between the truth and the campaign being waged against Iraq. Since the embargo was first imposed, UNSCOM, the UN special commission charged with controlling the destruction of weapons of mass destruction, has been perfectly free to carry out its work. Everything has been scrutinized by the inspectors with a zeal which sometimes borders on the hysterical. In any event, we have opted for openness. And what have we got in return? To date the Security Council has not shifted its position one iota, when the Iraqi people have been in great distress for the past five years. This is a violation of international law and an immense injustice. Responsibility for this lies with the United States.

[LE VIF-L'EXPRESS] One of the five UN resolutions applies to respect for human rights in your country. What progress have you made in this direction?

['Aziz] My reply will no doubt be somewhat brutal. But we have no lessons to learn in this area. Not from anybody! Did the Europeans have any scruples when they colonized Africa or Asia? And the treatment of the blacks? We are a country with a long history, with traditions and moral and social values. And justice of course. Do not forget that Mesopotamia already had a civil and penal code. As a Muslim country we apply Islamic law. Just like Saudi Arabia. And does anyone ask them to defend their human rights record? And what about Iran too? So I suggest that the holier than thou on the Security Council should pursue their investigations elsewhere.

[LE VIF-L'EXPRESS] But Iraq is still cutting off the hands of thieves and the ears of deserters.

['Aziz] I repeat, we apply Islamic law. The Jews have their own law: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." We are still in a state of war and we must protect our society. As regards deserters, they are judged by a military court. A few ears have been cut off for example.

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But that is better than the firing squad. In any event, do not worry, this practice has just been stopped.

[LE VIF-L'EXPRESS] Saddam Husayn's nephew, General Husayn Kamil, who fled to Jordan last summer, claims that in 1994 Iraq was once again preparing to invade Kuwait....

['Aziz] What credibility can you place in a man who has constantly lied? This is all pure slander. Do you know that the Iraqis, who hated him, rejoiced when he fled? It is probably the best thing he did in his whole life.

Iraq: KDP Offers To Help With UN Oil-for-Food Resolution

NC1302125896 Paris AFP in English 1149 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 13 (AFP) - The Kurdish opposition which controls northern Iraq has offered to help implement the UN oil-for-food resolution if Baghdad strikes a deal with the United Nations.

"We are interested in seeing (Resolution) 986 fully implemented," said the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in a statement sent to AFP late Monday [12 February].

"And we are prepared to cooperate fully to repair the pumping station and the oil pipeline in the Zakho region," said the group, which controls the area near the Turkish border in defiance of Baghdad.

It called for the formation of a mixed UN-Kurdish commission "to supervise the designated share (of aid) for the Kurdish north and to work out a mechanism for the distribution of food and medicine in Iraqi Kurdistan."

Under Resolution 986 which is being discussed in New York, Iraq would be allowed to export up to one billion dollars worth of oil per quarter, in return for food and medicine.

Most of the oil would pass through an Iraqi-Turkish pipeline which crosses northern Iraq and needs reparation.

The resolution provides for the partial lifting for humanitarian reasons of a more than five-year oil and trade embargo against Iraq, imposed after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

It calls for "equitable distribution" of medicine and food, especially to the Kurds who have been cut off from the rest of Iraq.

An Iraqi Shiite opposition leader, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al- Hakim, met Crown Prince Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah in Kuwait on Monday to discuss the UN-Iraq negotiations in New York.

An Iraqi official, meanwhile, renewed offers of a dialogue with the Kurdish opposition.

"Dialogue is the best way to assure reconstruction," Nuri Najm al-Marsumi, undersecretary at the Culture and Information Ministry, told the official newspaper AL-IRAQ.

"The errors committed in the past by some officials in charge of the Kurdish autonomous regions must not put in doubt the achievement" of autonomy for northern Iraq, al-Marsumi said.

"The dialogue which we seek must cover all problems...and be based on a rejection of any foreign interference," he said.

As part of apparent efforts to woo back the Kurds in the north, Baghdad said last week that it was ready to restore state electricity supplies to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iraq: KDP Welcomes Regime's Implementation of Resolution 986

JN1202132696 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Feb 96

["Text" of statement issued by KDP official spokesman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 5 April 1995, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 986, which allows Iraq to sell $2 billion worth of oil within a six-months renewable period. It was a condition that these revenues be used to meet the Iraqi people's humanitarian needs of food and medicine after deducting 30 per cent to cover compensation for those who suffered from the second Gulf war and for other matters. The resolution also stipulated the allocation of $130-150 million from each $1 billion of oil sales to provide food and medicine for the people of the Kurdistan region.

After months of rejection and reluctance, the Iraqi regime decided to hold negotiations with the UN General Secretariat to discuss means to implement the provisions of the oil-for-food resolution, notwithstanding that UN sources said that negotiations will only deal with means to implement the resolution and that there will be no room to change or negotiate over its provisions.

Negotiations between an Iraqi delegation and another representing the UN General Secretariat actually began on 6 February at the UN headquarters in New York. In general, the Iraqi delegation showed flexibility regarding means to implement the resolution and even regarding

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some provisions, which the Iraqi side had objected to for quite some time.

As a direct result of agreeing to hold negotiations, the value of the Iraqi dinar greatly increased, whether it is the dinar circulated in Kurdistan — that is, the Swiss-printed dinar — or the locally-printed dinar circulated in the rest of Iraq. Hence, this led to a paralleled reduction in the prices of basic foodstuffs. This should carry over to other goods in general if this situation continues.

Our Kurdish and Iraqi people welcomed holding negotiations and the positive change in prices with great happiness, which they expressed in various ways.

We in the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] welcome Resolution 986 — oil-for-food. We also welcome negotiations between Iraq and the United Nations on this issue. Furthermore, we consider the arrival of food and medicine and its fair distribution with the participation and supervision of the United Nations as a positive step that serves the Iraqi people, who are suffering a great deal from the embargo, and serves the Kurdish people who are also suffering from the double embargo.

We always support what serves the people and is in line with their desires and aspirations. We also highly value the UN Security Council's gesture of allocating a special share for the people of liberated Kurdistan as mentioned above. Moreover, we demand forming a joint Kurdish-UN organization to set up a mechanism to distribute food and medicine in the Kurdistan region.

We also express our full readiness to cooperate in implementing this resolution. This includes offering necessary facilities to repair the oil pumping plant in Zakho and securing the passage of oil in a proper way via the pipeline that crosses our region.

[Signed] An official spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

[Dated] 11 February 1996.

Iraq: Columnist on Dialogue With UN, Economic 'Boost'

JN1002091296 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 4 Feb 96 p 8

["AL-THAWRAH Diary" column by Husayn al-Shaharbali: "Away From Dialogue, Close to Interlocution"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In view of the importance of the dialogue to be held with the United Nations on Tuesday on oil for humanitarian needs, including food and medicine, and in order that people may not think that the current stage is linked with the expected results of this dialogue, and because I do not want to appear as if I want to discuss the topic and its results—as this is the task of the interlocutors named by the [Iraqi] leadership—we would like to say that the Iraqis are very optimistic. This might be overoptimism, but experience taught us not be overoptimistic.

Why this optimism, then? Is it because of the dialogue, which has not begun yet? Is it because of its expected results? Or is it because of the economic boost and the drop in all prices?

One might say: You are looking at things with one eye. Had there been no agreement on the dialogue with the United Nations the prices would not have dropped.

Well, let us discuss this: Is the announcement on the dialogue sufficient for this drop in prices and the quick increase in the dinar's exchange rate against the dollar? Is the announcement of something that has not been achieved sufficient to break the steel walls of commercial compounds, open stores, and break open boxes of commodities? The needy citizens have a right to buy things at reasonable prices.

Where is this economic theory which bases its profits, supply, and demand on news reports and which collapses when a news report is broadcast?

Do you recall that we in the past broadcast similar news on the issue of oil? We even held talks with the United Nations and reached a preliminary agreement before the United States jumped in to impose its hegemony and torpedo the agreement. However, the prices increased, the market remained as it is, and the suffering of people doubled.

Therefore, we say with frankness, truth, and confidence: The economic boost and the drop in prices are certainly the result of the president's letter to the Council of Ministers on 2 December 1995 on fighting inflation, reducing government expenditures, stopping the printing of banknotes, and pumping commodities at lower prices, as well as the subsequent economic measures.

The supply has increased and the demand, consequently, decreased. This was accompanied by curbing inflation. So, why shouldn't prices drop? Why shouldn't songs of joy be sung in the face of the greedy ones who rely on the blockade? Why shouldn't the patience and steadfastness of the Iraqis be rewarded with this relief?

The most important thing in all these positive developments is the fact that the citizens have become confident that their guarantee in all ordeals will always be Saddam Husayn.

Well, will there be a progress or retreat in our dialogue with the United Nations? I will leave the answer for

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those concerned. I also do not believe this will reduce Iraqi optimism. However, a clear fact still needs to be reiterated; namely, progress was achieved before dialogue and will continue after it. This is because the crossing did take place and the Iraqis are convinced that they have crossed to the other bank, and you can ask them.

Iraq: Paper Views Oil-for-Food Dialogue With UN

JN0902154796 Baghdad INA in English 1330 GMT 9 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 9, INA—An Iraqi daily confirmed on Friday that with the expansion of size and scope of Arab and international hopes for having the Iraqi-U.N dialogue over oil formula in return for food and medicine succeeded, the realization of Iraq's importance and the need for having her back to her national and world political and economic position, has further deepened.

Running a column Friday, AL-THAWRAH paper said the world warm official and popular welcome of the dialogue and the optimism about its success may have humanitarian reasons relating to honest desires for lifting the embargo on the Iraqi people.

The paper pointed out as well that a significant number of other reasons relate to the real need of plenty of states for having Iraq back to her normal situation and resuming cooperation with her after losing a lot during the embargo.

The daily added that attitudes supporting the dialogue and calling for lifting the embargo on Iraq increased with the growing understanding of the reality about what had really been done during years of the embargo, especially the remarkable patience and steadfastness of the Iraqi people who forced the world to respect them and deal with them with a big deal of attention and sympathy.

The paper concluded saying that the Iraqi people's strong will is what led to "blockading the blockade." They managed to turn the scales in their favours through the absolute support they gave to the leadership and the coalition they both form in fighting back the aggressive attempts of isolating Iraq and harming her people.

Iraq: Plans Made To Receive Planes Carrying Food, Medicine

JN1202152296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1045 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Feb (INA)—It was announced here today that Iraq is ready to receive planes carrying food and medicine and to provide all necessary facilities for landing and take off.

In a press statement, Jamil Ibrahim 'Ali, under secretary of the Transport and Communications Ministry, said that these preparations include preparing the proper places for landing and take off, air traffic control, ground and air equipment, as well as the necessary services to unload the planes' cargoes and transport them to warehouses.

Iraq: State Medicine Facilities Ready To Receive Supplies

JN1202184896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1025 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Feb (INA) — The General Establishment for the Marketing of Medicine and Medical Requirements, an affiliate of the Health Ministry, announced that its central storage facilities and distribution centers — which meet international standards — are now ready to receive and distribute medicine, medical requirements, and hospital equipment.

Akram 'Isa al-'Ani, director of the establishment, who stated this to INA, added that storage facilities had been left unattended due to the severe shortage of medicine and medical requirements. This is the result of the unfair embargo against the Iraqi people that has been in place for more than five years. The establishment has repaired and maintained refrigerators, loading, and unloading equipment for all stores.

The director noted the drop in the prices of medicine in the private sector, which is supplied by the Health Ministry at subsidized prices. Some owners of private drug stores attempted to turn humanitarian needs into a trade to achieve personal gains. The Health Ministry appreciates honest pharmacists who demonstrated noble and honorable national positions by abiding by the official price and not creating an extra financial burden for the citizens.

The director of the establishment said the stores are now ready to receive and unload medicine at full capacity, especially in the northern region and the city of al-Basrah.

Iraq: Price Drops Credited to Ministry Intervention

JN1102191796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prices of food supplies and other commodities today saw a remarkable decline in the al-Shurjah, Baghdad, and Jamilah vegetable markets.

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While touring markets, the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent noted that the decline in the prices of food supplies and the stabilization of the prices of other commodities can be attributed to the fact that the Ministry of Trade has continued to offer large amounts of food supplies and other commodities for sale and that the state of [words indistinct] in general has remained unchanged.

A source at the Ministry of Trade said that the ministry will offer large amounts of food supplies and manufactured products for sale via its central markets and the Baghdad International Fair.

Iraq: Review of Dollar-Dinar Exchange Rate

JN1302110096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 9 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The exchange rate of the U.S. dollar against the Iraqi dinar has witnessed a big drop recently, which has reflected positively on the purchasing power of the dinar following the scientific and practical measures which the government has adopted in implementation of the valuable purports of the message which leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve and protect him, addressed to the cabinet on 2 December 1995.

A specialized statistical study in this field issued by the Iraqi Central Bank says that the dollar exchange rate on 2 January 1996 reached 2,987 dinars. On 2 February, however, the rate dropped to 580 dinars. It then continued to drop until it reached 400 dinars on 7 February.

The study shows that the real recovery of the Iraqi dinar confirms the sound course charted by the message which leader President Saddam, may God preserve and protect, addressed to the cabinet to tackle inflation. It also reflects the sound bases on which the Iraqi economy is founded.

The positive results produced by the talks between Iraq and the United Nations regarding the exchange of food, medicine, and other humanitarian needs for oil have come to reaffirm that as soon as the Iraqi economy overcomes its temporary extraordinary circumstances, it regains its health and real effectiveness.

The following is a timetable of the dollar exchange rate during January 1996 and the first week of February and a timetable for the monthly average of the dollar exchange rate against the Iraqi dinar for the years 1990-1995:

Date	U.S. Dollar Rate in Dinars
2 Jan 1996	2,987 dinars per $1
3	2,867
4	2,825
5	2,820
6	2,930
7	2,930
8	2,950
9	2,895
10	2,958
11	2,950
12	2,950
13	2,925
14	2,900
15	2,895
16	2,895
17	2,750
18	2,770
19	2,600
20	2,200
21	2,300
22	2,265
23	1,700
24	1,325
25	1,025
26	1,025
27	1,375
28	1,300
29	1,075
30	900
31	695

During the first week of February 1996, the dollar exchange rate against the dinar was as follows:

Date	U.S. Dollar Rate in Dinars
1 Feb 1996	620 dinars per $1
2	580

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Date	U.S. Dollar Rate in Dinars
3	475
4	580
5	680
6	530
7	400

The following are the monthly averages of the exchange rate of the U.S. dollar against the Iraqi dinar during the period January 1990 to December 1995:

Date	U.S. Dollar Rate in Dinars
Jan 1990	3.200 dinars per $1
Jan 1991	5.300
Jan 1992	10.600
Jan 1993	37.700
Jan 1994	163.000
Jan 1995	706.000
Feb 1990	3.300
Feb 1991	Not Available
Feb 1992	12.800
Feb 1993	34.000
Feb 1994	239.000
Feb 1995	878.000
Mar 1990	3,500
Mar 1991	Not Available
Mar 1992	12.950
Mar 1993	37.550
Mar 1994	304.000
Mar 1995	1,191.000
Apr 1990	3.900
Apr 1991	Not Available
Apr 1992	11.800
Apr 1993	57.000
Apr 1994	327.000
Apr 1995	1,160.000
May 1990	3.650
May 1991	Not Available
May 1992	13.200
May 1993	68.700
May 1994	391.000
May 1995	1,187.000
Jun 1990	3.800
Jun 1991	6.000
Jun 1992	13.500
Jun 1993	81.600
Jun 1994	609.000
Jun 1995	1,741.000
Jul 1990	3.800
Jul 1991	7.250
Jul 1992	13.700
Jul 1993	68.350
Jul 1994	619.000
Jul 1995	1,659.000
Aug 1990	3.300
Aug 1991	7.500
Aug 1992	16.950
Aug 1993	71.900
Aug 1994	614.000
Aug 1995	1,891.000
Sep 1990	4.150
Sep 1991	8.000
Sep 1992	19.950
Sep 1993	82.900
Sep 1994	610.000
Sep 1995	2,252.000

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Date	U.S. Dollar Rate in Dinars
Oct 1990	4.250
Oct 1991	9.300
Oct 1992	28.750
Oct 1993	93.300
Oct 1994	606.000
Oct 1995	2,587.000
Nov 1990	5.050
Nov 1991	10.000
Nov 1992	27.700
Nov 1993	124.800
Nov 1994	630.000
Nov 1995	2,556.000
Dec 1990	4.900
Dec 1991	9.850
Dec 1992	32.900
Dec 1993	134.700
Dec 1994	635.000
Dec 1995	2,660.000

Iraq: Central Bank Head 'Confident' About Economy

JN1202170196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1355 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Feb (INA) — Iraqi Central Bank Governor Dr. 'Isam Rashid Huwaysh said he is confident the Iraqi economy will witness a tangible improvement in the future.

In a statement to INA, Dr. Huwaysh said President Saddam Husayn's message to the Council of Ministers on 2 December 1995 was greatly influential in neutralizing the growing currency surplus and in checking its negative effects. It represented an initial step toward tackling the surplus by increasing the commodity supply and absorbing some of the local currency surplus. This measure has been reflected positively on the current market and will also be reflected positively in the future.

Dr. Huwaysh emphasized that the strength of the Iraqi dinar depends on the strength and solidity of Iraq's economy and natural resources, which the enemies tried to harm by introducing foreign currency into circulation in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region. They failed, however, because our Kudish people there insisted on using the Iraqi dinar.

Huwaysh said the investment and commercial banks provide a sufficient base for future activity to maintain investment and activity in domestic and foreign trade and steer the available liquidity, especially in the post-embargo era.

He noted that the banks that were recently authorized to engage in banking activity are no longer specialized banks, but are also public banks that can meet citizens' needs and finance economic activity in the country.

The Iraqi Central Bank governor stressed that citizens' deposits in the banking system are being arranged, restructured, and organized so that the damaged banknotes are withdrawn and good ones pumped back into the market for circulation.

Iraq: Official Reports Crime Rate Decline

JN1102195396 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The crimes of car, house, and store thefts have recently seen a decline in all governorates.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, Major General Tahir Jalil al-Habbush, under secretary in the Ministry of Interior for security affairs, said that this decline in crime rate can be attributed to the measures the ministry has taken to implement the contents of the letter leader President Saddam Husayn sent to the Council of Ministers on 2 December 1995 and the economic results this letter has produced in terms of improving the living conditions of Iraqi families and boosting the citizens' purchasing power.

The Interior Ministry official added that deterrent measures, as well as the plans implemented by the General Police Department, as manifested in the competent performance of directorates, detachments, and anti-crime offices, have also contributed to the remarkable decline in the crime rate. He pointed out that competent police performance has accelerated the apprehension of several car thieves, some of whom were associated with manslaughter. Legal action has been taken against these criminals, who were sent to court to receive their just punishment, Maj. Gen. al-Habbush said.

The Interior Ministry official urged citizens to comply with orders and instructions that ban the firing of shots

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at weddings and happy occasions, because this behavior inflicts grievous harm on citizens. This reckless and unrestrained conduct has caused the death of many innocent people. He pointed out that his ministry will take stringent and deterrent measures against those who fire shots. He appealed to citizens to inform the competent security authorities about those who violate these instructions by firing shots unjustifiably. He asserted that the police will remain alert to protect citizens' lives and property and promote their security and stability under leader President Saddam Husayn, leader of the march of jihad and victory.

Iraq: RCC Permits State Banks To Engage in Money Exchange

JN0902200996 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 19 Jan 96 p 2

[RCC Decree No. 9 of 1996]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate

Republic of Iraq
Revolution Command Council [RCC]
Decree No. 9 dated 14 January 1996.

Decree

In accordance with the provisions of Paragraph (A) of Article 42 of the constitution, the Revolution Command Council decrees as follows:

First: In addition to their work, specialized state banks shall engage in commercial money exchange business in accordance with the provisions of the legislation applicable to state commercial banks.

Second: Employees of special government banks shall be subject to the provisions of the service legislation applicable to employees of state commercial banks.

Third: The minister of finance shall issue the necessary guidelines to facilitate implementation of the provisions of this decree.

Fourth: This decree shall be implemented as of the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

[Signed] RCC Chairman Saddam Husayn.

Iraq: RCC Decree Bans Personal Guards in Public Places

JN0902184196 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 22 Jan 96 p 4

[RCC Decree No.10 of 1996]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate

Republic of Iraq
Revolution Command Council [RCC]

Decree No. 10 dated 25 Sha'ban 1416 hegira, corresponding to 16 January 1996

Decree

In accordance with the provisions of Paragraph (A) of Article 42 of the constitution, the Revolution Command Council decrees as follows:

First: Whoever uses a guard for his protection in public places without the approval of an authorized quarter shall be punishable by imprisonment for a period of not less than one year and not more than three years. The members of his guard shall also be subject to the same punishment. This does not preclude the imposition of a harsher punishment if this act has also resulted in another crime.

Second: This decree shall be implemented as of the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

[Signed] RCC Chairman Sadam Husayn.

Iraq: Ministry Expands Power Transformer Factory

JN0902200396 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic 28 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by 'Ali 'Uwayyid]

[FBIS Translated Text] Teams of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals have succeeded for the first time in Iraq in expanding the electricity power transformers factory of the State al-Qadisiyah Establishment for Electrical Industries, increasing its annual production capacity to 200 transformers.

In a statement to AL-QADISIYAH, a spokesman for the ministry said that the establishment's technical and engineering teams succeeded in this project by depending on their own capabilities and local resources. He indicated that these transformers, which have a capacity of 95 G.A. and a transformation ratio of 11/132 kilovolt, are used in high tension power generators which are in demand, especially under the conditions of the unjust blockade which was imposed on our beloved country.

The spokesman added that the project, which costs 85 million dinars, was designed and implemented by depending solely on Iraqi capabilities. These rare type of transformers are very essential for disrupted Iraqi establishments, he concluded.

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Iraq: Paper Condemns 'Rumors' About Saddam's Illness

JN1102130596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0835 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 11 Feb (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has described as naive, exposed, and primitive the rancorous rumors circulated by the organs of deception and psychological warfare in Radio Monte Carlo and in the British factories of deception regarding President Saddam Husayn's illness.

In an article today, the paper says: What was carried out by these media organs, in coordination with intelligence officers and psychologists, did not fool the smart Iraqis or anyone else. Through this silly process, the aggressors wanted to divert attention from the positive changes taking place in the home of every Iraqi citizen as a result of the decline in prices due to the economic measures included in President Saddam Husayn's message to the cabinet on 2 December 1995.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that the traitors have failed to achieve their malicious objective of depriving the Iraqi people of their smiles and looking forward to good. It adds: They circulated this peculiar rumor to undermine the joy of the Iraqis, who rallied around their leader, and to prevent them from reaping the fruit of their hard jihad, wonderful construction, great march, and blessed patience.

The paper says this rumor comes from the rotten, poisoned reserves of the rancorous ones who Satan prompted to circulate this rumor, so God Almighty will expose them.

AL-THAWRAH says: Through the timing of this rumor, the enemies have expressed—with their tongues and pens—their bankruptcy, shakiness, failure, and disappointment. This rumor is further proof of the falsehood of those who shed crocodile tears over the Iraqi people's suffering and difficult living conditions due to the continued blockade.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH stresses that the Iraqis will tear apart all the remaining cards and that midgets will not benefit from their malicious methods which include circulating silly rumors against great people. Only midgets will continue to concoct conspiracies in the dark, the paper adds.

Iraq: Letter to UN Protests 'Spy Plane' Activities

JN1202213896 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq has protested the U.S. spy plane U- 2's violations of Iraqi airspace on the pretext of carrying out air surveillance for the UN Special Commission. Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf said in a letter to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Ghali that the Special Commission carried out two new violations of Iraqi airspace in January 1996. During the two incidents, the plane overflew vast areas for nine hours and five minutes, after taking off from its base in Saudi territory.

In his letter, which was handed by Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's permanent UN representative, the foreign minister reiterated Iraq's constant stand on this issue. He noted that this plane is being used for purposes other than those specified by the UN Security Council and that its activity harms Iraq's sovereignty and security.

He called on the United Nations to reconsider the use of this spy plane, which contravenes the objectives and principles of the UN Charter on the need for respecting the equality and sovereignty of all member states.

He said: Iraq maintains its right to demand compensation for the material and moral damages caused by these violations.

Iraq: Paper Questions U.S. Middle East Policy

MM1302141196 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by 'Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan: "U.S.-Israeli Mandate"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems, God knows, that President Bill Clinton's administration, whose foreign policy successes in Bosnia and Northern Ireland are faltering, has decided to return to the Arab region, the only area for easy victories for it. The regimes [there] are extremely cooperative and the peoples tame and submissive, having lost the power and the desire to react.

Iraq and Iran have become U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's chief concern. He has forgotten China and its enormous strategic ambitions, the Russia Federation attempting to regain its former expansionist glory, India beefing up its presence in Kashmir day after day, and the Asian tigers making a clean sweep in the economic field, and now sees the whole world only through the eye of the besieged, starving Iraqi needle.

Four days ago Perry announced that his country is cooperating with Jordan and other states in the region to topple the Iraqi regime. Yesterday, in Helsinki, he stated that Iraq and Iran are the biggest threats to the Middle East's stability, and consequently Washington will increase its military presence in the region.

We find it difficult to understand how Iraq, which has been destroyed, and Iran which is besieged, now pose

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a threat to the stability of the whole region and not just the Gulf, while Israel which possesses nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and occupies Arab territories is seen as a gentle lamb by the U.S. defense secretary. Arabs are supposed to deal with it [Israel] on this premise and to view the settlements achieved as the epitome of happiness and joy.

The clear purpose behind exaggerating both the Iraqi and Iranian threats — and the U.S. defense secretary talked openly about it — is to send new troops to the area. Naturally, the Gulf states will pay the bill for all their expenses, just as they are doing now with 20 million soldiers [as published] stationed in whole military cities in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

What is certain is that the United States is tailoring its extortion tactics to fit its security and economic needs. Having exhausted all means to force the purchase of new weapons and secured all construction deals for its companies (the civilian aircraft deal and extension of the Saudi telephone network), it has resorted to direct extortion tactics, forcing these states to shoulder the cost of its gradual occupation of the area on the pretext of protecting it from the Iraqi and Iranian threats.

Regrettably, some Gulf regimes welcome this occupation, believing it to be more civilized than any Arab "occupation," and do not hesitate for a second to pay what is required of them by the U.S. Administration and more, while using debts, falling oil prices, and the high cost of the Gulf war as an excuse each time they receive an Arab leader from the "supporter" states suffering from the interest on U.S. debts and the IMF's catastrophic requirements.

We may not be able to argue a great deal about the issue of the Iranian threat, since this is a threat which — if it exists — could be contained within an Arab context. However, we will definitely argue until the end about Perry's remarks on the alleged Iraqi threat. What kind of a threat is Iraq to Jordan, Egypt, Syria, or even Kuwait itself, when it does not even possess what it needs to import milk for its children and medicine for its sick, and when all its chemical weapons and missiles have been destroyed?

And even if both threats exist, they are not directed against Arabs, but against Israel and all U.S. attempts at hegemony over the region with a view to exploiting its wealth and interfering in its affairs. The United States started to adopt the policy of dual containment only after Israeli pressure, and Washington did not move to prevent Iranian-Russian cooperation in the nuclear field until after Israeli unease about it increased.

We fear that the whole Arab region will come under the U.S. mandate because of the alleged fears over Kuwait and its sovereignty and independence. The number of U.S. naval forces and troops in the region is increasing each year because of these fears, and it would not surprise us if the U.S. Administration appoints military governors in the region's capitals before the end of the 20th century, the same way that Britain did at the end of the 19th century.

The Iranian threat represented by the Islamic revolution led by Imam Khomeyni was contained as a result of a seven-year war involving Iraq. The Iraqi threat to Kuwait ended after the destruction of Baghdad. The question that remains is how to get rid of the U.S. threat to the region and its independence, supported by Israel's supremacy and by its new Arab proteges.

We address this question to all those who are fond of everything American and oppose everything Arab, viewing it as the greatest evil.

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Israel: Peres, Netanyahu Agree To Set Elections for 28 May

TA1202192496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the meeting held this evening between Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu, the two leaders for all intents and purposes agreed that the elections will be held on 28 May. Netanyahu, however, will give his final answer tomorrow morning. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports, however, that the religious parties prefer that the elections be held on 4 June due to the Pentecost holiday, and the senior Labor echelon is willing to concede on this matter.

In their meeting, Peres and Netanyahu failed to settle the controversy over the law banning television broadcasts of candidates' pictures one month prior to the elections. The representatives of the two parties will continue discussing this issue. Senior Labor sources say it may be necessary to withdraw from the plan to annul the law in order to prevent the party from being depicted by the public as hurting the opposition.

Israel: Poll Shows Peres Continues Lead Over Netanyahu

TA1202191996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Studio report by political correspondent Nisim Mish'al]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres' and Binyamin Netanyahu's performance yesterday at the opening of the election campaign did not change the balance of votes between them. This was revealed by a special poll conducted by the Rafi and Hanokh Smith Institute for Mabat. Our political correspondent Nisim Mish'al reports:

A day after the news conferences held by both Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu the Smith Institute conducted a public opinion poll gauging the public's preference for the premiership, which had the following results: Shim'on Peres — 47 percent; Binyamin Netanyahu — 35 percent; David Levi — 5 percent; undecided — 13 percent.

The margin between Peres and Netanyahu has remained stable and today's poll shows that the news conferences held by the two leaders yesterday had no influence on the public's attitudes.

Israel: Baraq—Elections Will Not Halt Syrian Talks

TA1302064396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has said that early elections will not halt the continuation of the talks with Syria. The foreign minister made the remarks to correspondents in New York.

[Begin Baraq recording] I believe that there will be another round of talks at Wye Plantation. If the outcome of that round calls for further talks, I do not see why they should not continue until two to three weeks or even days before the elections. I am convinced that issues like economics and water require a great deal of work between experts. The need to look into the possibility of expanding the talks to include other countries in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula requires a great diplomatic and national effort. I hope that all these things will be worked on until days before the elections. I see no reason why that should not be the case. I have grounds to believe that the Syrians understand the value of continuing these talks and that they, like us, are aware that both sides have an interest in the continued development of the political dialogue and the aspiration to achieve peace. [end recording]

Israel: Car Bomb Threat Forces Closure of Territories

TA1202190196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] As of 2100 [1900 GMT] this evening, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will impose an indefinite closure on the territories. Our correspondent in the territories Yoram Kohen reports that the entrance of Israeli citizens into the Palestinian Authority areas is also banned. The decision to impose the closure came in the wake of warnings about mass attacks in Israel apparently planned by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in retaliation for the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, the Engineer. Wednesday [14 February] will mark the 40th day since the killing of 'Ayyash.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 12 February includes a related report by military correspondent Roni Daniyel adding: "There is a very concrete and clear warning about a terrorist organizations' plan to blow up a car bomb in a densely populated area within the Green Line. In a consultation held today between the Shin Bet chief, IDF representatives, and the prime minister, it was decided to immediately impose a complete closure on all the territories with no deadline being set for the lifting of the closure."]

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Israel: Deputy Minister on Closure, PA Antiterror Moves

TA1302064096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 13 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or by Me'ir Einstein; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Einstein] The closure on the territories is open-ended. When do you anticipate it will be lifted?

[Or] I cannot give you the date, of course, but it will be lifted at the earliest possible opportunity. We have received several reports, some of them very serious. That is why we, with a heavy heart, banned the entry of tens of thousands of Palestinian workers. I hope that we will be able to lift the closure as soon as possible. It was not an easy decision, but it followed several serious warnings involving several locations.

[Einstein] We heard that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has complained about the move.

[Or] That is true, but I think that those to whom the situation was explained understood that it is of primary importance to us — also to them, but primarily to us — that there be no terrorist attacks. When we think of the attacks that have already taken place, any closure and any punishment of the Palestinians pales when compared with what could happen. I hope that, at best, we will be able to capture the people or, at least, create a situation in which they will not be able to act.

[Einstein] What is your impression of the PA's activities against terrorist squads?

[Or] They do a lot in their way. The fact that two important Islamic Jihad activists were killed by the PA almost two weeks ago is a very good sign. With regard to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], which is a much larger organization and more difficult to deal with, the PA is taking different measures, some of which are still not sufficiently effective.

[Einstein] You say: in their way. In other words, you are saying that we are not really satisfied with their actions.

[Or] I am saying that they open fire much more swiftly against the Islamic Jihad, as we saw over a week ago, than against Hamas. They use detentions and more of a carrot-and-stick approach with that organization. At this stage, this method is also proving itself, but it is not yet harming the organization's infrastructure.

[Einstein] How is the cooperation between our security forces and that of the PA working in the war against terrorism?

[Or] In general, it works very well. This closure was implemented in coordination with the PA. They know about the circumstances and about some of the reports we have received. We inform them of the reports we get, and they also do everything they can to prevent suicide attacks, car bombs, and other activities. I reiterate that Hamas still has a very strong infrastructure and that the road to its destruction is still very long.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 13 February reports that "Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said that the warning about planned terrorist attacks was received several days ago and the security forces were deployed accordingly. Roadblocks have been set up and helicopters are being used along the dividing line."]

Israel: Peres—Closure Until Further Notice, Review Daily

TA1302082296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, has said that the closure on the territories will continue until further notice and will be reconsidered on a daily basis according to the situation. The closure decision followed reports about attempts to infiltrate into Israel to carry out terrorist attacks on the 40th day of the death of Yahya 'Ayyash, The Engineer.

Israel: Peres Aide Denies Accord With Syria

TA1302102596 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 13 Feb 96 p 26

[Report by London-based correspondent Eli Kamir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the course of his most recent visit to the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was successful in achieving a Syrian-Israeli agreement of principles, the Arabic-language daily AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT (THE MIDDLE EAST), which is published in London, reported yesterday.

Political sources in Jerusalem categorically denied the report. 'Aliza Goren, the prime minister's media adviser, said: "The report contains no truth. It is baloney." [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres Congratulates 'Arafat on Election as Council Head

TA1202201796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres phoned Yasir 'Arafat today and congratulated him upon

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his being sworn in as the chairman of the autonomy council. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that 'Arafat thanked the prime minister and said he will act with Peres and his government to achieve full peace between the Palestinian and Israeli nations.

Israel: Sarid Congratulates 'Arafat on Election as Council Head

TA1202175296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Sarid congratulated Yasir 'Arafat upon being sworn in as the head of the Palestinian council. Sarid expressed the hope that we will see 'Arafat elected as president of a Palestinian state that will coexist in cooperation with Israel. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that in his letter Sarid wrote that 'Arafat has shown himself a brave and loyal partner in the process of reconciliation between the two nations. Sarid expressed the conviction that 'Arafat will pursue his struggle against the enemies of peace, just as we have to uproot the stray weeds in our garden, as he put it.

Israel: Dispute Over Plans To Build Beyond Green Line

TA1302102196

[FBIS Report] Israeli media on 13 February carry several reports on the government's plans for construction in the territories.

Writing on page 8 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English, Bill Hutman reports: "The government has decided to freeze the controversial plan to build a new Jewish neighborhood at Har Homa in southeastern Jerusalem, according to sources close to the project.

"The sources said contractors who were supposed to begin work in the coming weeks on infrastructure at the site, between Ramat Rahel and Bayt Sahur, were told the start-up date was postponed indefinitely.

"Prime Minister Shim'on Peres also recently told opponents of the project, which is slated to include some 6,000 residential units, that at least for the meantime work would not go ahead. The government last year announced it was behind the plan.

"Interior Minister Hayim Ramon is committed to using his ministry — which must give final approval for construction — to hold up the Har Homa plan, according to the sources. The plan is awaiting approval by the district planning commission.

"A spokeswoman denied that the ministry had already taken steps to prevent work at Har Homa, however she confirmed that Ramon had ordered no work to begin at the site until he had personally reviewed the plan.

"'All signs indicate that the government has finally realized this is a politically inflammatory plan,' said attorney Dani Seidmann, an activist with 'Ir Shalem, one of the groups that has led the fight against Har Homa.

"'We can only hope this is part of a larger policy review in eastern Jerusalem, Seidmann said. Opposition to the project has centered on criticism of development at a time when negotiations are set to begin on the city's future.

"Deputy Mayor Shmu'el Me'ir (National Religious Party) charged that the government had promised the PLO it would not move ahead with Har Homa or any other major public housing project in the capital.

"'The government is doing everything it can to prevent building in eastern Jerusalem,' Me'ir said.

"City officials noted that the project has been held up before because of international pressure and Palestinian criticism, but said it is essential in order to relieve the growing housing shortage.

"The officials said there is no bureaucratic reason for the delay in construction, as the plan was published over three months ago and only several dozen Palestinian landowners presented their opposition.

"'If the government were really behind this plan, work could have started already,' said a senior city official."

A report by Alex Stomakhin on page 2 of Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew says that Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer said on 12 February that "he will see to it that construction continues in the territories in areas close to Jerusalem, meaning Giv'at Ze'ev, Betar, Ma'ale Adumim, and the 'Etzyon Bloc. The minister added that construction in Har Homa in southeast Jerusalem will continue." He made these remarks in a meeting with the mayor of Ma'ale Adumim and the heads of the Giv'at Ze'ev, Efrat, and 'Etzyon Bloc regional councils.

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT adds: "The ministerial committee on construction in the territories will convene next week to approve Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer's plan to add 6,300 apartments beyond the Green Line. Minister Shulamit Aloni criticized the plan, saying it is aimed at doing away with the negotiations on the permanent settlement and at breaking the link between East Jerusalem and the territories. It is being affected by the elections, and the aim is to grab as much as possible.

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"The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza reacted to Aloni's remarks by calling her a racist. The council said illegal construction continues in all Arab areas of Judaea and Samaria. Therefore, it is vital to continue Jewish building, it added.

"Peace Now said the government is giving out election bribes with one hand and giving a resounding slap to the peace process with the other. Our correspondent Gil Litman notes that Minister Yehuda 'Amital will be included on the ministerial committee on construction in the territories."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0800 GMT adds: "Three ministers — Shulamit Aloni, Yosi Beilin, and Yosi Sarid — are firmly opposed to Minister Ben-Eli'ezer's plan to build over 6,000 housing units in the territories, especially around Jerusalem. Minister Sarid conferred with Prime Minister Peres last week and made his position known to the prime minister.

"Sarid told our correspondent Gil Litman that people who waited over four years can wait another four months. If Peres wants to join forces with the religious parties and Tzomet after the elections, he will be able to build in the territories as much as he wants, but he will be destroying the peace process with his own hands, Sarid noted. Minister Beilin announced that he would oppose the plan at any forum where it is raised."

The report adds that "the prime minister commented this morning on the issue of construction in the territories, saying that the government made certain commitments that it will continue to implement. Anything necessary for normal life will not be stopped, he said."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0900 GMT reports that "Finance Minister Shohat conferred in Ari'el with Knesset Member Ron Nahman, the council head, and told him that the government will not invest in building infrastructure or developing an industrial zone in Ari'el and will not approve the construction of additional apartments in the town. He added that the government differs from the Likud with regard to the order of priorities and prefers to invest in the Negev; however, because it is duty-bound to enable Ari'el residents to enjoy a normal standard of living, it will provide an extra mortgage to those who want to expand their homes."

The report adds that Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said that Ben-Eli'ezer's plan "will be raised at the next cabinet meeting and that he expects an official and binding explanation."

Israel: Peres Pushes for Israeli UN Mediator on Cyprus

TA1302111596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Feb 96 p A1, A10

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is campaigning for the appointment of an Israeli as a UN mediator in the dispute between the Turks and Greeks in Cyprus. Among the candidates for the job is former Foreign Ministry Director General David Kimche. The prime minister will decide on his candidate in the coming weeks. [passage omitted]

Peres has been involved in the Cypriot problem since his visit to the island as foreign minister in July 1994. He raised the matter in his talks with senior political echelons in the United States and Europe, where he was asked to suggest an Israeli mediator.

Political sources in Israel said that solving the Cypriot crisis will pave the way for Turkey's membership in the EU, which is a high strategic interest for Israel. Peres has already acted to persuade the European Parliament to approve the customs union agreement with Turkey. [passage omitted]

Israel: Diplomat Expelled From Russia 'Caught' Spying

TA1202183696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 12 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli diplomat who was expelled from Moscow several weeks ago was caught by the Russian authorities while trying to obtain spy satellite photos whose sale is banned in Russia because of their high resolution.

The quality of satellite photos is determined by their resolution, namely, their ability to distinguish between the smallest objects received by the satellite lens. The Russian Government sells medium-resolution satellite photos which can distinguish between bodies two meters apart. Such photos can be freely purchased in Russia.

The Russian satellites also relay to ground stations high resolution photos which can distinguish bodies one meter or even half a meter apart. The Russian Government forbids the sale of these high resolution photos, but according to several reports it is possible to buy the high resolution photos on the black market via middle men or by bribery.

According to the Russian newspaper KOMSOMOL-SKAYA PRAVDA the Israeli diplomat was expelled

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from Russia after he was caught by the Russian authorities "in the act of spying." The Russian Government decided not to declare him a persona non grata and preferred to ask that he leave the country quietly. The paper assessed that Israel may make similar steps and may even expel a Russian diplomat in reaction.

The Russian media devoted little coverage to the affair after it was exposed in Israel, making do with quoting the official statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman which highlighted the discrete handling of the affair. The Russian intelligence service refused to comment on the capture of the Israeli diplomat.

Russian Government sources criticized the coverage given to the affair in Israel when it was actually supposed to remain a secret.

Israel: Alleged Poll Says Golan Settlers Willing To Leave

TA1102115596 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 11 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Goga Kogan]

[FBIS Translated Text] A poll conducted by the Golan Settlements Committee [GSC] gauging the willingness of the Golan settlers to make concessions in the framework of a peace agreement, whose results were incongruent with the committee's goals — was such a poll shelved?

The GSC's spokesman has denied the existence of such a poll, but members of the Way to Peace circle — who support concessions on the Golan Height in exchange for peace — claim that such a survey was indeed conducted, but that the committee went on to conceal the surprising results, which indicated that a significant percentage of Golan Heights settlers are willing to make concessions.

Yig'al Kipnis, the circle's coordinator, says that "from the nature of the questions asked it is possible to understand that the poll was not conducted by an outside body, rather by the GSC, which wants to ascertain how many 'soldiers' will obey its orders in anticipation of the struggle against withdrawal."

Israel: Peres Denies Pollard Charges of Involvement

TA1302060196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Jonathan Pollard claims that Prime Minister Peres instructed him to spy on the United States. [passage omitted]

Although Peres was prime minister when Pollard was arrested in November 1985 outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington, he denies any involvement in the affair. The statement from the Prime Minister's Office said that the prime minister had received the Pollard letter. It said that Peres was not involved in sending Pollard to spy but added that the prime minister is concerned about his situation and discussed the matter in his last visit to the United States with President Bill Clinton.

Israel: Labor MK Holds 'Secret' Talks in Algeria, Tunisia

TA1202182296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 12 Feb 96 p 23

[Report from Paris by Orli Azulay-Katz]

[FBIS Translated Text] Labor Knesset Member [MK] Rafi Edri has been conducting secret meetings to establish diplomatic relations between Israel and Algeria.

Several days ago, MK Edri held a secret meeting with Algerian administration officials in Algiers. At the same time, Edri has been holding contacts with the Tunisian president, hoping to set a date for a visit to Tunis by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres before the Israeli elections, probably at the end of March.

The contacts with Algeria have been slow. So far, Algeria has refused to hold any contacts with Israel, due to pressure by the local Muslims. After winning a landslide victory in the elections, however, President Liamine Zeroual appointed a liberal foreign minister who favors resuming ties with Western countries, which led to a secret dialogue with Israel.

MK Edri, who received Peres' blessing for the diplomatic moves, is taking action expecting to present yet another government achievement in relations with North African states before the elections. Israel already has relations with Morocco, liaison offices with Tunis are due to open soon and, as reported, secret contacts are being held with Algeria.

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Jordan: King Answers Questions After Mecca Pilgrimage

JN1202142596 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1020 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, 12 Feb (PETRA)—His Majesty King Husayn returned to the homeland at dawn today at the end of a short visit to Saudi Arabia during which he performed the 'Umrah [the minor pilgrimage]. [passage omitted]

In press statements upon his return, his majesty said: Praise be to God for giving us the opportunity to perform the minor pilgrimage and to visit Prophet Muhammad's Mosque. [passage omitted]

Answering a question on the health of the custodian of the two holy mosques [King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia] and whether a meeting was held between their majesties, King Husayn said: I was not honored this time to meet with him, and I think he is in good health and is recovering well from the illness which we all know. He said King Fahd asked the crown prince to convey his greetings to us.

Answering a question on Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's visit to Saudi Arabia, and whether the visit complements or conflicts with his majesty's visit, his majesty said there was no conflict, and that he would visit President Mubarak within the next few days, probably next Thursday, God willing.

On whether the participation of various Jordanian political trends in his majesty's visit to Saudi Arabia was a signal of a collective Jordanian action at this stage in particular, his majesty said: Praise be to God, our family always acts collectively.

Answering a question on early elections in Israel and the results of that on the peace process, his majesty said: God willing, the results will be positive rather than negative. [passage omitted]

Jordan: King on Ties With Saudi Arabia, 'Promising' Future

NC1202191396 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Feb 96

[By Rana al-Sayyid in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] A climate of frankness and clarity prevailed throughout the Jordanian-Saudi talks, which were held in the blessed city of Mecca and chaired by King Husayn and Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi crown prince and commander of the Saudi National Guard. They discussed ways of promoting bilateral cooperation and developing relations in all spheres. Before leaving Medina at the conclusion of his first official visit to Saudi Arabia in four years, King Husayn made an exclusive statement to MBC Television about the results of his visit.

[Begin Husayn recording] I believe that we are on the threshold of a really promising future that will involve full mutual understanding and a wish to work in unison to attain all possible good for our nation. All possible good will be attained in the future, God willing. This will be done on a solid foundation of mutual trust and agreement not to allow any party or circumstance to drive a wedge between us, as happened in the past. We will stay in touch and consult on all matters. [end recording]

In the context of their continuing consultation and cooperation, the two countries agreed to convene a meeting of the Jordanian-Saudi joint committee immediately after 'Id al-Fitr.

[Begin Husayn recording] I believe that we will resume our contracts very soon and develop our cooperation in all spheres, God willing. [end recording]

In the context of Jordan's quest to clear its differences with the Gulf countries, MBC has learned that Jordan is trying, through very-high level contacts, to restore its relations with Kuwait.

Jordan: King Says Talks With Saudi Leaders 'Useful, Frank'

JN1202200196 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Report on news conference by Jordanian King Husayn with unidentified correspondents at Amman International Airport on 12 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian-Saudi relations are now stronger than ever before, based on a joint eagerness to maintain them now and in the future and to prevent any party from harming these relations, as happened in the past.

His Majesty King Husayn said this upon his return, with God's protection and care, from a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during which he performed the 'Umrah [minor pilgrimage]. His Majesty King Husayn said that his talks with Saudi leaders were useful and frank and that this is a new start for relations between the two countries.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Welcome back, Your Majesty. First of all, allow me to congratulate you on performing the 'Umrah.

[Husayn] Thank you and may God bless all of you. Praise be to Almighty God, who allowed me to perform

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the 'Umrah and to visit the prophet's tomb. From a spiritual aspect, this was really one of the most wonderful visits.

In addition, the visit gave us the opportunity to hold a long-awaited meeting with our dear brothers. I believe that whatever blemished bilateral relations is now something of the past. Relations are now stronger than ever before, based on our joint eagerness to maintain these relations now and in the future and to prevent any party from harming them, as happened in the past. At the same time, we are eager to play our role and perform our duty toward our nation, God willing, and toward the two fraternal countries.

All the talks were useful, frank, and honest. There was a determination to keep in constant contact and to talk openly about all issues to prevent what happened in the past. Praise be to God, a stage has ended and now it is a promising start, with God's help.

[Correspondent, in English] Your Majesty, could you tell us about the health condition of His Majesty King Fahd? Did you see him?

[Husayn, in English] [words indistinct] had the pleasure of seeing him this time. I believe he is in good health, but he is recuperating from the condition that all of us were aware of some while ago. I understand that he is doing extremely well, and he was kind enough to ask the crown prince to send his best wishes.

[Correspondent] Can you comment on the recent statements by the U.S. defense secretary?

[Husayn] The U.S. defense secretary made statements. They later said that they, in a way, changed ['addalu] some of these statements. Our stand on Iraq is clear. We support the Iraqi people. We have always and will continue to support Iraq's unity, territorial integrity, and national unity on all its national soil, as well as saving it from the situation it is facing. This is our stand.

[Correspondent] Thank you, Your Majesty. [end recording]

Jordan: al-Kabariti Lauds King's Visit to Saudi Arabia

JN1202212096 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1635 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 12 Feb (PETRA)—Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti asserted that His Majesty King Husayn's visit to Saudi Arabia will increase the solidity and strength of the fraternal relations between both sisterly countries on firm bases of cooperation and coordination in the service of both fraternal peoples and the Arab and Islamic nations.

In a statement to the Saudi newspaper 'UKAZ, al-Kabariti said that relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia are deeply rooted and strong and that they are not new.

The prime minister noted the great role that Saudi Arabia, led by the custodian of the two holy mosques — King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz — and his highness the Saudi crown prince, is playing in international forums to serve the Arab and Islamic causes. He said that the whole world has respect and appreciation for the consistent and constant positions taken by the Saudi Government in the service of joint Arab and Islamic action. Al-Kabariti asserted that his government considers promoting relations between the two sisterly countries as one of its most important tasks in the near future.

Jordan: Minister on Ties With Saudis, Kuwait, Palestinians

MM1302090996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Jordanian Information Minister Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Amman Attaches Great Importance to King Husayn's Visit to Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Jordanian Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir has said that the Jordanian Government attaches great importance to King Husayn's current visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In a statement to AL- SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Amman he expressed his hope that the visit would contribute to bolstering Jordanian-Saudi relations and reinforcing them in all spheres.

He stressed that relations between Saudi Arabia and Jordan are excellent and will witness further coordination and cooperation to serve the two countries' interests.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir added that the region is passing through a new phase — which prompts further cooperation among the Arab states. He stressed that the Jordanian Government is interested in consolidating its relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and all the Arab states.

The Jordanian information minister said: We in Jordan are very happy that Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz is now cured, and we wish him good health and look forward to establishing stronger relations with the Kingdom under the custodian of the two holy mosques and Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

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The Jordanian minister praised the Saudi position on present Arab issues, saying: The Kingdom's policy has always promoted reconciliation. And we are always seeking to mend the rift among the brothers. He pointed out that the Kingdom helped Jordan a lot, "and we have not forgotten this help, and we will always value highly and thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the custodian of the two holy mosques for these excellent brotherly attitudes toward Jordan and its people."

On the status of Jordanian relations with the Arab Gulf states, al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan is making efforts to improve relations with the Gulf states and that these relations have now been restored to their normal status, and we hope that they will continue to strengthen.

On Jordanian relations with the State of Kuwait, Minister al- Mu'ashshir said that there are positive signs as regards the resumption of Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations in the light of the messages exchanged recently between Jordanian Crown Prince Hasan and Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister.

Al-Mu'ashshir renewed the Jordanian Government's commitment to working to consolidate its relations with the Arab states. He said: We believe that inter-Arab relations should be strong in order to enable the Arab states to keep pace with current developments in the world. The Jordanian information minister said that the idea of establishing a confederation between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority is premature at present, pointing out that King Husayn has on several occasions stressed Jordan's commitment to supporting and backing the Palestinian people in their endeavors to determine their destiny and establish their independent state on Palestinian territory with Jerusalem as its capital.

Jordan: Syria Reportedly Asks Amman Not To Interfere in Iraq

JN1202134196 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that Syria asked Saudi Arabia to tell Jordan not to interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs and to leave this affair to the Iraqi people alone.

An informed Jordanian source said this issue will be discussed during the king's current visit to Saudi Arabia. The source added that Jordan repeatedly said through its officials, most recently the information minister, that it supports Iraq's unity and territorial integrity and has no plans or intentions to topple the Iraqi regime. Jordan also does not plan to cooperate with any foreign party to impose any situation or policies that are rejected by, or not in the interest of, the Iraqi people.

Jordan: Israel Agrees To Pursue Joint Projects

TA1302123396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 13 Feb 96

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem from Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir and Finance Ministry Director General David Brodet held with Prince Hasan and the new Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti ended a short time ago. The meeting dealt with the economic ties between the two countries, as well as political subjects. It was agreed to hold a trilateral meeting of the United States, Israel, and Jordan to recruit investments from the U.S. private sector for joint projects. It was also agreed to hold an Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian meeting on transportation and tourism projects, as well as to develop free trade zones in the region by means of an economic conference which will convene in Amman in the near future.

Prior to the meeting, Uri Savir met tete-a-tete with Prince Hasan. Savir briefed the prince on the talks with Syria and heard from him about the improvement in relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia in the wake of King Husayn's meeting with the Saudi crown prince.

[Begin Savir recording] From Amman, we can see how regional peace is advancing not as a distant vision but as a process that has practical economic aspects. We discussed the change in trade relations in the Middle East. We definitely see the link between economics, politics, and regional peace and see them developing in relation to the progress between us and the Jordanians, Palestinians, and Syria. [end recording]

Savir, Brodet, and Ambassador Shim'on Shamir are now meeting with the Jordanian planning minister. Later, they will meet with the water and irrigation minister.

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Lebanon: Fadlallah Claims Struggle, Resistance Will 'Intensify'

MM1302102196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Fadlallah: The Struggle Will Intensify Further, the Resistance Will Not End But Will Harden Instead"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-HAYAH — Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has stressed that "the struggle and resistance will not end, but will harden and intensify further," adding that "the resistance knows how to open more than one breach, how to develop more than one style, and how to reactivate the situation."

In his speech at an Iftar [meal marking end of fasting day in Ramadan], he said: "People around us are saying that the settlement will come and the [new] phase will change your situation. We say that we are not working for a phase, but that we know, from Islam's past experience and our present experience, that one phase does not consume another, but instead it could put pressure on a phase and perhaps lead to another phase, opening up horizons for the settlement to come — if any. These are agreements by groups with self-centered interests and will not strip us of our strength. They may put pressure on us, weaken us, or neutralize some of us, but many of those who live by the spirit of the message and its responsibility and strength live up to their faith in their intellect, emotions, movement, approach, and plans, and have a great hope in God and the future."

He added: "We are aware that historical traditions and social and world traditions dictate that we should remain in the arena in a position of strength, by trying to get rid of all weak points and developing all strong points. The struggle will not end, but instead, will intensify further. The resistance will not end, but instead, will harden further. Some people may relegate the resistance to a minor position, but we believe that the resistance knows how to open more than one breach and develop more than one style, and knows how to reactivate the situation. People cannot control the whole situation. People want to act on the premise that they have the greater power, but — while the United States is taking measures to ensure that its ideology becomes the world's — we know that we will not be alone in our struggle against U.S. arrogance. Other forces will join us. We may not agree with them on ideology, or we may not agree with them with regard to strategic interests, but we agree with them partly. They do not want to fall before the United States as an economic or political force, and we do not want to fall before the United States as an economic or political force."

Fadlallah said: "We only need to look at all the political and economic contradictions and the security and cultural complications facing U.S. ideology and the U.S. economy to know that we will not be alone in thinking about financial power. Therefore, we must look at the situation to know that the situation harbors more than one opportunity and more than one force. Do not cast a superficial glance at the situation, lest you be deceived by it and start yielding to those who ask you to be realistic on the premise of surrendering to the fait accompli. Take an in-depth look at reality, and you will see much in it that could serve our interests and benefit us."

Lebanon: 'Resistance' Attacks Israeli Patrol

NC1202123996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli warplanes today carried out two mock raids over Tyre. The hostile planes were confronted by the anti-aircraft guns of the Lebanese Army. Responding to the repeated Israeli attacks, resistance men used machine guns and rockets to attack an Israeli patrol travelling along the road to the al-Dabshah post this morning. The attack killed one member of the patrol and wounded three.

Lebanon: 2 SLA Soldiers Killed, 1 Wounded in Blast

TA1202175196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers were killed and another soldier suffered moderate injuries when a roadside charge exploded in south Lebanon's western sector today. The wounded soldier was evacuated by an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] helicopter to Haifa's Rambam Hospital.

Lebanon: 3 SLA Members Killed in Hizballah Operation

NC1202181396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two members of the South Lebanese Army [SLA] were killed and another was wounded when a bomb went off in the western sector of the security zone, according to AFP, which cited an SLA source.

Hizballah issued a statement saying the operation left three SLA members dead and a number of others wounded on the Tayr Harfa road in the western sector.

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This is the first time that resistance operations have left SLA members dead since the beginning of the year. Shortly afterward, Israeli helicopters raked the region and Israeli artillery bombarded the outskirts of Zibqin and Yatar with 30 rounds.

Elsewhere, the eastern hills of Kafr Rumman and al-Wadi al-Akhdar came under intensive shell fire from the Israeli forces' positions in al-Zaffat this afternoon. Mazra'at al-Hamra' and Hima Arnun were also bombarded.

Lebanon: Israeli Gunboats Reportedly Sink Lebanese Fishing Boat

NC1302122396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning Israeli gunboats fired on fishing boats near Tyre. They hit and sank one boat, the crew of which escaped unharmed.

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Syria: Iraqi Official Comments on Damascus Water Talks

JN1202141096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam from Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn, Iraqi Irrigation Ministry under secretary and head of the Iraqi delegation to the meetings of the joint Syrian-Iraqi technical committee on water, has told Radio Monte Carlo that the committee currently convening in Damascus to discuss Euphrates water has discussed the measures that the Iraqi and Syrian sides will take if Turkey continues to implement its projects on the Euphrates River such as the Birecik and Carchemish dams. Among these measures is to deprive the French, British, Italian, Austrian, and Belgian companies which will implement these dams of any projects that could become available in Syria or Iraq, in addition to the possibility of resorting to an Arab move by taking similar measures against these companies on the level of the Arab homeland.

'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn said that these companies could be brought to trial because, from the legal point of view, they have no right to carry out such projects without obtaining permission from the riparian countries.

Syria: Paper Berates Israeli Land Confiscations

JN1302084196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH editorializes on the massive and intensive Israeli land confiscations in the Arab territories, which are aimed at consecrating the status quo of the greater part of the territories not covered by self-rule, saying: The current Israeli approach was sufficiently epitomized by a statement made by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq two days ago to the effect that his entity is adamantly opposed to withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders. This position not only shows the disadvantages of the frail limited self-rule accord, which liquidated the Palestine question, undermined the Palestinian people's legitimate national rights, and consecrated the Israeli occupation of most Palestinian territories, but also reveals Israel's intransigent and inflexible stand toward the overall Middle East peace process. For withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 borders is the basic prerequisite of a just and comprehensive peace that would return rights to their lawful owners, defuse all hotbeds of tension and conflagration in the region, and ensure the achievement of the aspired security, stability, and development. The failure to meet this condition would only place more obstacles and difficulties in the way of the peace process.

Syria: Press Criticizes Likud Leader Netanyahu's Peace Stand

JN1302091496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, the newspaper TISHRIN addresses the peace stand of Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu, who has repeatedly said that he would never endorse a Golan withdrawal, and that he would revoke any agreement that could be achieved in this regard. The paper says: The statements made by the Likud leader over the past few years are strange, because he aims to retain Israeli control of the Golan, southern Lebanon, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. Similarly, he seeks to displace the Palestinian people and subjugate them to an endless siege. Moreover, he seeks to terrorize the residents of southern Lebanon and intimidate the Lebanese heartland. This means that Netanyahu has not entertained the notion of achieving peace. This is because peace, according to the unanimous view of the world community, is achievable only when Israeli occupation is reversed and the usurped Arab territories are returned to their lawful owners. As for the Likud leader, he has frequently said that he would not abandon Israeli control of a single inch of Arab territory. We do not think that the plans of the Likud leader are unknown to Israelis, or Western politicians and officials.

The paper wonders: Is it possible for the West to wriggle out of its commitments to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and open its coffers for the Likud leader so he may fill the Arab territories with settlements?

TISHRIN concludes by saying: Syria is for just and comprehensive peace. It will continue its efforts to achieve such peace regardless of the party ruling in Tel Aviv. Moreover, Syria will not abandon a single inch of its territory. Nor will it relinquish any of its rights. Syria will not accept any peace that does not return all the territories and rights. It will continue to struggle with all means to restore its occupied territory.

In a commentary addressing the same issue, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Israel's real intentions are clear to all those familiar with Israeli statements. Israel is seeking its own version of peace. It is oblivious to the basic requirements and prerequisites of peace. Israel's return to raise old ideas that were rejected, such as

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those regarding partial withdrawal, upgrading the level of negotiations, or an Israeli referendum on a Golan pullout are part of maneuvering tactics aimed to return the peace process to square one. These maneuvers could only obstruct the peace process. Israel's ideas regarding the peace process have remained extremely shallow, if not futile. If it really seeks peace, Israel must abandon its obstructionist views and address substantive issues in the peace process, which are complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon and the restoration of rights to their lawful owners. In the course of handling these substantive issues, Israel must demonstrate a positive attitude.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: The achievement of peace is contingent upon the efforts of those sponsoring it, and also upon a positive Israeli posture. It goes without saying that the next Maryland talks will once again test Israeli intentions as well as U.S. credibility, particularly since the United States pledged to play the role of a dynamic and active full partner in the talks. It is our hope that it will honor this commitment so that the new opportunity may not be wasted by the conduct of Israeli officials, which is not in harmony with the bases of the peace process.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: HCC Members, Others Meet in Islamabad

LD1202205196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Hekmatyar, the mojahed amir of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], has participated in a High Coordination Council [HCC] meeting. A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports from Islamabad that the meeting was attended by brother Hekmatyar, General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, the leader of the National Movement; Mr. Mohaqeq, a representative of Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity]; Mansur Naderi [leader of Ismailis in Afghanistan]; Qariborrahman Sa'ed, acting head of the cultural committee of Hezb-e Eslami; Ghairat Bahir, the representative of Hezb-e Eslami in Islamabad; and Dr Taleb. They talked in detail about the situation in the country.

The report says that in addition to the HCC leaders, the meeting was also attended by the representatives of the Council for Understanding and some other parties that are opposed to the Kabul administration. They held talks about the formation of a united front. [passage omitted]

According to another report, yesterday Qazi Husain Ahmad, the leader of Jamaat Islami of Pakistan, met separately with the jihadi leaders and had a discussion with them on a solution to the Afghan problem.

Our correspondent says that yesterday unofficial multilateral meetings were held between brother Hekmatyar; Qotboddin Helal; Mr. Sa'ed; some members of Hezb-e Eslami's executive committee; the leader of National Movement and the accompanying delegation; Mr. Mohaqeq, representative of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan; Wahidollah Mojaddedi, representative of the Jabha-ye Nejat-e Melli-ye Afghanistan [National Liberation Front of Afghanistan]; Abdol Satar Sediqi, representative of Harakat-e Enqelab-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan [Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan]; Hamed Gayiani, representative of Mahaz-e Melli-ye Eslami-ye Afghanistan [National Islamic Front of Afghanistan]; and Haji Abdol Qadir [governor of Nangarhar]. During the meeting the ways of resolving the crisis in the country were discussed and considered. [passage omitted]

It should be mentioned that a Taleban delegation has also arrived in Islamabad. So far it has not officially participated in the talks. The delegation headed by Mullah Rabbani has twice met General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, the leader of the National Movement. It has also met Haji Abdol Qadir, the governor of Nangarhar.

Afghanistan: Taleban Prepares New Attack in South Kabul

LD1202150196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] According to a reliable government source, reports from Kabul say that the Taleban group is seeking to attack the Afghan Government forces in the area after recruiting forces in Herat and Kandahar Provinces and transferring them to the south of Kabul. According to the report, the Taleban have brought 800 of their troops to the south of Kabul. Government planes attacked this group last Friday. A number of the troops were killed or injured as a result of last Friday's attack.

Afghanistan: Six People Injured in Rocket Attack on Kabul

LD1202195196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Six people were injured when rockets fired by the Taleban hit Kabul. BAKHTAR reported to us that last night and today the Taleban fired 10 rockets into residential areas of Kabul. As a result, six people were injured and [words indistinct] houses were damaged.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Civil Servants Urge Cancelling 'Farcical' Elections

BK1202140896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1238 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Article by Nadeem Qadir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Feb 12 (AFP) — Bangladeshi civil servants Monday called for peace talks between the government and opposition parties and asked for this week's polls to be cancelled. Some 1,000 civil servants held a meeting at the high-security government secretariat complex here to present their demands and ask that they be taken off election duties because of harassment and death threats, sources said. The meeting was followed by talks with Establishment Secretary Habibur Rahman, where they renewed their demands.

In a leaflet addressed to Cabinet Secretary Ayubur Rahman, they urged Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque to stop Thursday's "farcical one-party" elections and asked President Abdur Rahman Biswas to immediately convene a "round-table meeting" of ruling and opposition parties. Signed by the "Civil Service

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Members" the leaflet also said the president should resign if he failed to heed their demands.

The senior ruling party leader, Badruddiza Chowdhury, told reporters he was unaware of the meeting, adding there were 800,000 civil servants in the country and the small number at the meeting hardly mattered. The meeting came as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia prepared to make her final election pitch in a nationwide broadcast later Monday as the major opposition staged rallies in downtown Dhaka.

At the rally the opposition said the country was heading towards a "prolonged civil war" allegedly because of Zia's lust for power and reiterated "there will be no elections." The death toll during two weeks of political campaigning has risen to 14 with scores injured and hundreds arrested following clashes between police and opposition activists as well as rival groups.

The mass circulation daily JANAKANTHA newspaper reported Monday that 500,000 security personnel, including troops, would be brought in to maintain law and order during the polls. Foreign missions have cautioned their nationals against visiting Bangladesh, the INDEPENDENT daily said.

Opposition groups, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League, are boycotting the February 15 general election for 300 seats in parliament, and have also vowed to disrupt it. Wajed, who warned Zia of serious consequences if the "farcical one-party" polls were not called off, is also scheduled to address a rally of professional groups in Dhaka to drum up support for planned poll disruption.

Latest victim of the escalating violence was 30-year-old Mohammad Abdul Hamid, who died in southeastern port city of Chittagong late Sunday of bullet wounds in clashes between rivals, the INDEPENDENT said. Two hundred others, including 15 policemen, were injured in home-made bomb blasts and day-long clashes Saturday in coastal Barisal, where a local office of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party was stormed and several election candidates assaulted, the INDEPENDENT and other newspapers reported.

In southern Khulna city, three home-made bombs were lobbed Saturday into the guarded private residence of parliamentary speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, but no one was injured, the daily INQILAB reported. Several home-made bombs went off harmlessly outside a nearby poll office. In western Sirajganj, where Zia made her last election stop Saturday, a day-long opposition-enforced general strike paralysed the river port town. Several bombs went off near a well-guarded rally addressed by the prime minister. About 30 people were injured in sporadic clashes between rival factions, police and newspapers reported. A bomb exploded harmlessly near Zia's motorcade as it sped away from the rally.

Wajed's Awami League and allies — the deposed Jatiya Party and fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party — have spearheaded a two-year campaign to force Zia's resignation and hold new elections under a caretaker administration. Wajed insisted that free polls under Zia were impossible. Some 1,500 candidates, including 300 from the ruling BNP, are vying for the 300 seats. Also in the fray are 460 independents, and candidates from some 41 [word indistinct] or alliances. In 50 constituencies Zia, some of her ministers and top party members are unopposed.

Bangladesh: Armed Forces To Assist in Election Duties

BK1202163296 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chief election commissioner, Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has said the commission has engaged armed forces, police, BDR [Bangladesh Rifles], Ansar [paramilitary forces], and VDP [Village Defense Party] to maintain law and order for holding the sixth parliamentary elections in a free, fair and impartial manner. He was speaking at a high-level meeting of the law enforcing agencies in Dhaka today.

Justice Sadeque said under the constitutional obligation, the Election Commission is bound to hold elections within 90 days of the dissolution of the fifth Parliament, which has been dissolved on the 24th of November last. After threadbare discussions, the meeting decided to strengthen patrol in different areas by Army, the Navy, Air Force, BDR, police, Ansar, and VDP. The meeting also decided to arrest people who indulge in violence and to resist the forthcoming elections. The members of the law enforcing agencies will also ensure safety and security of all officials engaged in election duties. Presided over by the chief election commissioner, the meeting was also attended by Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil, Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam, and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmad.

Bangladesh: Public Rallies Banned for 48 Hours Before Elections

BK1302054496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A ban on all kinds of public meetings, processions, and rallies for 48 hours from

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midnight tonight to Thursday midnight has been imposed on the occasion of the ensuing general elections. A press release issued by the Election Commission in Dhaka yesterday said no one will be allowed to arrange or take part in any public meeting, procession, and rally during this period; besides no one will be allowed to create violence and disturb voters and election officials and show their muscles and use arms. Violators of the directives will be liable to rigorous imprisonment from two years to seven years with fine.

Bangladesh: Election Commissioner Comments on Poll Preparations

BK1002094996 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 9 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has said that all necessary legal and administrative measures have been taken for the holding of parliamentary elections next Thursday. He was addressing senior officials of Chittagong and Sylhet divisions at the Rural Development Academy in Comilla today.

The commissioner directed all concerned officials and members of law enforcing agencies to ignore threats from any quarter and advised them perform their duties sincerely, honestly, and fearlessly. He said threats to resist elections is a recognizable offense and punishable under both Criminal Code and election laws. The chief election commissioner also directed the officials to resist anti-election forces and firmly maintain law and order before and during the elections. He emphasized that if anyone engaged in election duty refuses to perform his duty or displays any negligence, he will be liable to up to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment. Justice Sadeque said that the officials will have to ensure that there is no rigging or stuffing of ballot papers. He also mentioned about the unprecedented steps taken by the Election Commission to ensure a congenial atmosphere to votes to be cast and for the credibility of the elections.

Election Commissioner and the secretary of the Election Commission also spoke on the occasion. Present among others were the additional secretary of the Election Commission, general officer commanding of 33 Division, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, deputy inspector general of police, commanders of the Army and the Bangladesh Rifles, adjutant of Ansars [paramilitary force], superintendent of police, and other concerned officials.

Bangladesh: Paper Details BNP's Election Manifesto

BK1202140096 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 7 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ruling BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] said it will not extend the 25-year Indo-Bangla treaty upon its expiry and ruled out the possibility of allowing transit and port facilities to India if it is voted to power again, report agencies. "It will not be extended .... people do not want it to be extended," BNP Secretary General Barrister Salam Talukdar said of the Indo-Bangla treaty, a sensitive political issue. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, signed in March 1972, expires next year.

Announcing BNP's election manifesto at the party central office here yesterday afternoon just 9 days before the election scheduled for February 15, he also said that BNP, if it retains power, would do its best to realise the country's due share of the Ganges water.

Asked about BNP's 1991 election commitments, like separation of judiciary from the executive, scrapping of black laws and autonomy for radio and TV, Talukdar said, "It is not possible to keep all the commitments." He said BNP did not take back the bill brought in Parliament for separation of judiciary from the executive, it would have been passed if Parliament was there.

Talukdar said the Special Powers Act of 1974 [under this act police can detain suspects for 120 days without filing specific charges against them] could not be repealed due to lack of time and opportunity and sidetracked the issue of autonomy for radio and television.

The BNP Secretary General hoped that his party would win the election and voters' turnout would be near last election's turnout of 53 per cent. He told a questioner that legitimacy of the election does not depend on who is taking part in the election or not. In this, context, he said the parliament elected through the 1986 polls functioned despite boycott of the election by the biggest political party BNP.

He parried a question on whether the next Parliament would be short-lived as the third and fourth parliaments elected through the 1986 and 1988. "People's participation will ensure the life of the sixth parliament," he added.

Former Deputy Leader of the House Prof A.Q.M. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Information Minister Shamsul Islam, BNP leader Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddiqui and Nazrul Islam Khan were present at the press conference.

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The BNP Secretary General asserted that the election will be meaningful, "but we certainly feel sorry for there will be less fight in the election in absence of major opposition parties." He said people are not at all bothered about the hartal [strike] called by the opposition parties on the election day.

Talukder said the BNP government had exerted all its efforts to solve the political crisis through discussion and giving maximum concession to the opposition political parties within the ambit of the Constitution.

The Prime Minister even offered to step down 30 days ahead of the election and also agreed to take part in the election under an advisory council headed by the President if it was formed within the framework of the Constitution, he said. But, he regretted that the Opposition parties had not agreed to accept any formula. All the sincere efforts of the BNP went in vain and the opposition parties refrained from taking part in the election being held as per the Constitution. He said the election had become a necessity to uphold the Constitution and under no circumstances the government or any citizen can violate the Constitution.

Talukdar said it is not possible to postpone the elections even by making a reference to the Supreme Court at this stage. Talukdar told another questioner that the Opposition is responsible for the collapse of the efforts for an understanding on the holding of elections as it failed to turn up for a meeting mediated by the U.S. ambassador.

The opposition parties came out with certain proposals to solve the lingering crisis but at one stage they themselves backed out from these proposals, he said. Asked whether efforts are still underway for a solution, he said the next parliament may throw some light in that direction. "Not at all ..... we do not believe in rumour .... you should also not believe ..." was the cryptic answer to a foreign journalist, who asked him about rumours of impending emergency in the country.

The BNP Secretary General told another questioner that there is no question of granting transit through Bangladesh and facility of Chittagong port to India.

In an oblique reference to the current crisis, the manifesto said. "The parliament formed through the election can only bring necessary amendment to the Constitution." "By boycotting and resisting the polls, one can only linger and make the problem complex, but cannot solve the programme [as published] which requires a constitutional amendment," it said. BNP in its election manifesto announced a 36-point programme for achieving national progress and alleviating poverty. The 36-point programme has been formulated in the light of the 19-point programme of late President Ziaur Rahman.

The highlights of the programme are the continuation of market-based competitive economic programmes and rapid industrialisation through mobilising local and foreign investment, acceleration of the building of a modern and sound economic infrastructure through industrialisation and economic growth.

The BNP manifesto decided to increase easy term credit facilities, expand the availability of electric power for irrigation and agriculture development activities. It would increase the facilities for easy availability of quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides and provide incentives for machanisation of farm activities.

The BNP would continue to give the highest allocation to the education and health sectors for human resources development and decided to involve the women in the overall economic development activities on a wider scale. With regard to the allocation of financial assistance the poverty alleviation, communication network, rural development and electrification, health and family welfare sectors will get priority.

The manifesto explain party policy on national security and in the field of foreign affairs and said it will not renew the friendship treaty with India. It also pledges to pursue a neutral foreign policy based on friendship with all nations, stressing special ties with the Islamic countries.

Bangladesh: Cease-Fire Extended in Chittagong Hill Tracts

BK1302132696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1215 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government and the Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Council have agreed to extend the cease-fire in the three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts till 31 March. The term of the previous cease-fire will expire on 15 February.

India

India: Rao Speaks on Ties With Pakistan, U.S.

BK1302133596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has reiterated that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India is a historically established fact. Mr. Narasimha Rao conveyed this to three visiting U.S. Congressmen who called on him in New Delhi today. He said as far as Indo-Pakistan relations are concerned, New Delhi is ready to discuss all outstanding issues bilaterally within

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the framework of the Simla agreement. Referring to Indo-U.S. relations, the prime minister said they are on a strong foundation and are growing in many areas. The Congressmen said that they will continue to work to further strengthen Indo-U.S. relations.

India: Envoy to UN Speaks at Washington Meeting on Nuclear Issue

BK1302093196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has called for total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework and rejected the American approach of merely reducing the threat of nuclear weapons. Speaking at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace in Washington, India's permanent representative at the UN, Mr. Prakash Shah, said that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty should be a true disarmament instrument. He said it should not only stop further development of nuclear weapons, but should be instantly followed by other disarmament measures. These can include a convention on nonuse or threat of use of nuclear weapons. He hoped that there would a wider and deeper reduction in nuclear stockpiles and a ruling on illegality of nuclear weapons. Mr. Shah said India is against the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty — NPT — because it was meant to prevent nonproliferation of nuclear weapon countries and not of nuclear weapons.

India: Top Kashmiri 'Militant' Favors Talks With Government

BK1302054896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, another top militant and chief of the Mahaz-i-Azadi favors a dialogue with the center [federal government] to find a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue. In a statement, the militant leader, Azam Inqilabi, said the initiative taken by the four militant leaders for a peaceful solution to the issue is a step in the right direction.

In a separate statement, the chief of the Ikhwan-i-Muslemoon also called for elimination of the gun culture.

India: Kashmir Leaders Offer Talks With Government

BK1002075496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Center [federal government] is awaiting details of the statements of four Kashmiri militant leaders offering to have talks with the government without any preconditions. The offer was reportedly made by the former deputy chief of Hizbul Mujahideen, Mr. Imran Rahi; former self-styled chief commander of the Muslim Janbaaz Force, Mr. Babar Badr; and the former self-styled chief commander of Al-Baqr, Mr. Bilal Lodi; and the former deputy chief of Muslim Mujahideen, Mr. Ghulam Moinuddin Lone. In a statement in Srinagar yesterday, they had also criticized Hurriyat Conference for their approach to Kashmir problem.

India: Kashmir Parties Condemn Leaders for Talks Offer

BK1202155896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Strongly condemning the offer of unconditional talks made to India by four Kashmiri rebels, All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders have stated that it is an Indian ploy to harm the freedom movement. Criticizing the offer of bilateral talks made to India by the four Kashmiris, Mir Waiz Umar Farooq, chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, has urged his organizations to expel those leaders for issuing irresponsible statements and for making an offer of unconditional talks with India. He said these leaders have become puppets of the Indian Government, who want to disrupt the struggle of the Kashmiris. The Conference has appealed to the people of Kashmir to be united. In an interview after the meeting, Mir Waiz Umar Farooq informed the conference leaders that the Kashmir issue cannot be resolved bilaterally. He said all the three parties to the dispute — Pakistan, India, and Kashmiris — should sit together and find a solution to the dispute.

Stating that the offer of talks made by the four Kashmiris makes no sense, People's League Leader Shabbir Shah said Pakistan too is a party to the dispute.

India: Air Force Plane Crashes in Rajasthan; Pilot Killed

BK1302012796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Rajasthan, an Indian Air Force fighter plane crashed near Khelopura village of Hanumangarh District yesterday afternoon, leaving the pilot dead. According to official sources in Jaipur, the plane took off from Sirsa in Haryana and crashed in the jungles of the Khelopura village situated on the Haryana-Rajasthan border. Details of the mishap are awaited.

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India: Article Sees 'Collision' With U.S. Policy

BK1202144296 Madras THE HINDU in English 10 Feb 96 p 8

[Article by Prem Shankhar Jha: "On a Collision Course"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ever since the U.S. made halting the further spread of nuclear weapons capability and the development of delivery capacities one of the cardinal aims of its foreign policy, India and the U.S. have been headed for a collision. Both countries have done their level best to postpone if not avoid it. The U.S. has sought to engage India in a constructive debate on a wide range of subjects, in the hope that the deepening relationship would help it to influence India's policies on the nuclear and missile development issues. India has responded to these overtures and met the U.S. halfway on a wide variety of issues ranging from market access and intellectual property rights to halting the development of the "Agni" missile and delaying the deployment of "Prithvi".

But this phase of cooperation and dialogue is drawing rapidly to a close. For most Indians, the U.S. decision to release $368 million worth of arms to Pakistan in a onetime waiver of the Pressler amendment was a watershed that marked the failure of India's attempt to forge a new relationship free from the compulsions of the Cold War. It also brought home to them that India could not expect even understanding, let alone support, on key issues affecting its national security. They, therefore, no longer see any need to take U.S. susceptibilities into account in the pursuit of India's security.

The change has manifested itself with almost dramatic swiftness. In the Thar desert, American satellites spotted new fencing earthworks, drilling equipment and pipes, and what might be electrical cables, and concluded that India was preparing to carry out its second nuclear test, after a hiatus of 22 years. India has categorically denied that it intends to carry out another test, but, in almost the same breath, both the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, and the Foreign Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, have made it clear that India will not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) until the nuclear powers commit themselves to eliminating all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. India has resumed the development of Prithvi and successfully tested the 250 km version, and announced that it will start deploying the 150 km range Prithvi with the army soon.

The Indian actions and statements have provoked considerable dismay in Washington. On the CTBT, U.S. spokesmen have dismissed the Prime Minister's carefully reasoned plea that the nuclear powers cannot seriously expect to police the spread of nuclear weapons with complete success forever, and accused India of playing its old game of putting impossible conditions in order to wriggle out of its commitments. They also consider India's refusal to consider the repercussions of a nuclear test or the deployment of ballistic missiles, on its neighbours irresponsible. Consequently, the U.S. administration has begun to issue veiled warnings to count the cost of going down this road.

These reactions are reinforcing each other. Therefore, if good sense does not prevail, a collision cannot be postponed for much longer. This is most likely to come over the signing of the CTBT, which the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has promised to the American people before this year is out. No country needs a collision that it can avoid. Both India and the U.S., therefore, need to ask themselves once more whether the scope for a constructive dialogue is really exhausted. It is not, but for it to be resumed each country has to treat the concerns of the other with a great deal more respect.

Indian policy-makers, and the intelligentsia that moulds opinion in the country, need to accept the U.S. assurances that its supply of arms to Pakistan was not a move intended to weaken India, but to give it a greater leverage in that country and help the Benazir Bhutto regime to control fundamentalism and terrorism in Pakistan at a minimum cost to India. This may be a high risk strategy, but given Pakistan's pivotal role in both the international narcotics trade and the new wave of Islam-inspired terrorism, and the threat to the U.S. on both counts, its willingness to gamble on the Bhutto regime in order to control both is understandable.

Whether we admit it or not, India has a vital stake in the US's success in Pakistan and, by extension, in the survival and strengthening of democracy in Pakistan. For, the alternative to it would be another military regime, which would seek legitimacy once more, as President Zia did, from religion. Such a regime would be unstable, fundamentalist, militaristic and therefore overtly committed to the destabilisation and dismemberment of India. Thus the least that India owes the U.S. is a chance to make its strategy succeed. In concrete terms, this means that India should on no account test a nuclear weapon now, or deploy Prithvi. Quite apart from giving the U.S. its chance to stabilise and influence the government there, the present level of threat to India, even from Pakistan, is just not high enough to make either step necessary.

But if India needs to avoid jeopardising the U.S. strategy, then Washington needs to understand that it

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is India that will have to bear the consequences if it fails. These will be the emergence of a hyper-nationalist military government in Pakistan, probably formed by elements within the army closely allied to and supported by the Inter Services Intelligence, strongly linked to the Jamaat-i-Islami, and ready to impose a Wahaby fundamentalism on the country. Such a regime will not only control the regular army but will overtly direct the activities of some 2800 or so committed Islamic terrorists from Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern countries with the aid of the drug money and fresh recruits to militant fundamentalism drawn from the Islamic universities in Islamabad and Peshawar.

While India's foreign policy continues to seek accommodation with the present regime, Indian defence policy will have to be predicated on the possibility, indeed reasonable probability of such a regime coming to power in Pakistan. It goes without saying that even if there had not been Pakistan's 50-year unrelenting struggle to annex Kashmir, no Indian Government in its right mind could agree to any measure that leaves it vulnerable to nuclear threats from such a regime. Thus further developing and mass producing Prithvi, and getting Pokaran ready for another nuclear test at short notice, are as vital to India's national interest as not actually deploying the missile and not actually holding a nuclear test. That being so, the question of signing the CTBT cannot even arise.

It is most unlikely that those in the State Department and the White House who have cooked up the U.S. policy towards Pakistan are not aware of the price of failure. They can also not fail to see that it is India, and not the U.S., that will pay most of the price. What prevents the U.S. from translating this awareness into a coherent policy towards India is its failure to reconcile its commitment to a general policy goal — nuclear nonproliferation — with the need to make allowances for the specific circumstances of individual countries. This is not because such an accommodation is difficult — the U.S. has, after all, been treating Israel with kid gloves on this same issue for years — but because from the very beginning, the U.S. has treated India with a species of contempt that now makes it very difficult for Washington to take the country seriously.

This unspoken contempt is the real reason why the U.S. insists that India must be treated as a non-nuclear power, discounts its exemplary record in international relations and its restraint on nuclear issues, and makes light of the fact that over 22 years India has not embarked on a full-fledged weapons programme, has never sold, or passed on any nuclear weapons or even reactor technology to any other country, has scrupulously stood by its commitments on every nuclear technology agreement, and never broken the laws of any other nation to acquire its technology. The U.S. will never gain India's cooperation if it does not shed this attitude and treat India with the respect that its size and record merit.

Indian policy-makers are also not free of blame, for their stands on key issues, such as the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty] and Kashmir in the past, and the CTBT today, have tended to be disingenuous. For the sake of a saner and more peaceful world India can, and should, continue to champion a CTBT with reciprocal obligations for the nuclear countries. But it should also make it clear that the conditions in which it championed a CTBT have ceased to exist for the South Asian subcontinent. Thus no matter what the outcome of the Geneva conference, India will, at the very least, have to defer the signing of the CTBT till the cloud that looms over South Asia lifts.

India: Editorial—CIA Report Represents 'Heartfelt U.S. Wish'

BK1302063696 Delhi NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 10 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "These Country Wreckers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The CIA, the U.S. intelligence agency, has predicted that India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh will soon be reduced to fragments. In addition to these three countries, the CIA has also expressed apprehension regarding the likely fragmentation of 16 more countries, which include Armenia, Niger, Gambia, Malawi, and Turkey. The actual basis of the CIA's "fair apprehensions" is believed to be a report by the commission chaired by U.S. Vice President Albert Gore.

The United States will determine its policy toward other countries and its relationship with them over the next two years on the basis of this commission's assessment. This means that future U.S. policy regarding this subcontinent's three countries—that is, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—will be decided on the premise that these countries will soon break into pieces. The arguments used to justify the prediction of the fragmentation of India and some other countries, however, seem to suggest this prediction is based less on fact and more on American "wishful thinking."

It is no longer a secret that a powerful and undivided India represents a severe threat to U.S. supremacy because the emergence of powerful countries in this subcontinent would sound the death-knell to U.S. economic imperialism and would indicate that the end of U.S. establishments in this part of the world had arrived. This is precisely the reason why the United States plays an important role in instigating those powers that want India broken apart. Many events in the past have proven

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this; the aforementioned U.S. prediction is a clear case of wish playing father to the thought. It is certainly an expression of a heartfelt U.S. wish, though it is garbed in futuristic analyses and presented as part of a well-planned strategy.

The CIA has based its analysis on heavy theoretical interpretations and has predicted India's fragmentation looking at the structure of its democratic setup. It says that poor democracies are more brittle and unstable than rich democracies or poor autocracies, although autocratic countries are more prone to breaking up than democratic ones. The CIA opines that poor democracies fail to survive as a united whole because they fail to meet their people's essential needs. According to this U.S. assessment, India is unable to satisfy its people's basic requirements, and the disgruntled and disillusioned Indian people will soon cause the country's dismemberment.

It appears the CIA has drawn extremely wild conclusions because of its superficial knowledge of Indian democracy. It does not know that India's binding and integrating factors have a very deep base, which people with surface vision cannot see. Despite all the diverse opinions and differences, India has one identity, which has kept it a united whole over many millennia. India cannot be broken apart so casually with that identity intact.

India: Editorial—'Mischievous Element' in Bomb Rumors

BK1302090896 Delhi HINDUSTAN in Hindi 10 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Weapons to Pakistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan's chances of receiving U.S. weapons worth $368 million seem to be in jeopardy once again. Although it is difficult to predict when the U.S. Senate will be in the mood to clear the Brown Amendment and the Pressler Amendment, the Brown Amendment seems to carry less weight in the wake of the latest report by the CIA. The Pressler Amendment has once again gained relevance; its author, Mr. Pressler, has already sent a letter to the U.S. President drawing attention to the fact that he had indicated the possibility of such a situation just prior to passage of the Brown Amendment.

This time the situation was caused by the CIA's report to the U.S. Administration in which the Agency confirmed information about Pakistan's receiving from China the material to enrich uranium and other nuclear materials to facilitate the creation of a bomb. Following this report, the Clinton administration would be subjecting itself to its own country's ridicule if it still gives Pakistan the weapons, so the deal with Pakistan has been left hanging again. Nothing remains final, however, and nobody can assert with any finality that this deal will ultimately be scrapped.

Looking at the U.S. attitude, which vacillates between the Brown Amendment and the Pressler Amendment, it can be said with some degree of finality that the U.S. Administration is using these two amendments according to its needs and not out of conviction. This time the situation bringing about change in the U.S. attitude was occasioned by the confirmation of China's support to Pakistan in nuclear matters. If the U.S. Administration now plans to take any action against Pakistan on this issue, it would be killing many birds with one stone.

First, it can overplay Chinese assistance to Pakistan in order to create misunderstanding and dissension between China and India. Second, it will have a good excuse to take Pakistan to task. Looking at the way the United States uses both India and Pakistan in its foreign policy, it is apparent that both India and Pakistan have no more than a pawn's status in the U.S. game of aggrandizement. It uses both countries against each other with such precision that, realizing their current helplessness, they both end up playing dumb and accommodating U.S. designs.

The report given to the U.S. Administration by the CIA also contains a prediction that 16 countries are likely to become fragmented soon, including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The report also claims that the nuclear bomb possessed by Pakistan is twice more deadly than the one in India's possession. Of course, the CIA is in a better position to know whether or not Pakistan possesses the bomb. As far as India's having a nuclear bomb is concerned, India has none and is not intending to make one. Nevertheless, both India and Pakistan would do well if they remain wary of the mischievous element enshrined in such "confirmed" rumors. India should try to confirm the facts in its own way without relying on these type of reports and must formulate its strategy on the basis of its own findings.

Iran

Iran: UN Human Rights Envoy Arrives, Begins Talks

LD1002103396 Tehran IRNA in English 0845 GMT 10 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 10 (IRNA) — Maurice Danby Copithorne, UN special representative on the situation of human rights in Iran, arrived here early on 9 February [date as received]. He was greeted at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport by Foreign Ministry officials and Ibrahim Jabr, UNICEF representative in Tehran, a UN source told IRNA here Saturday.

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Immediately after arrival, Copithorne started talks with the Foreign Ministry officials, he added.

Copithorne, who is visiting Iran at the invitation of the Iranian Government, will be in Tehran until 16 February. He is scheduled to hold talks with Iranian officials.

Iran: Velayati Meets UN Human Rights Commission Envoy

LD1302162296 Tehran IRNA in English 1559 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 13, IRNA — Foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati said here on Tuesday [13 February] that the performance of the United Nations since its establishment has not been clear particularly in connection with the human rights issue.

In a meeting with the visiting rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Maurice Danby Copithorne, Velayati said Iranian nation has experienced numerous examples of the UN's selective approach towards the human rights.

Velayati said, "The Iranian people believe that the United Nations is under the influence of the big powers."

On the United Nations double-standard towards different countries, Velayati said the big powers are exploiting and misusing the human rights issue against the independent countries which do not bow to their imposed policies.

Velayati stressed the need to take into consideration the cultural differences among states including Iran which enjoys outstanding civilization and culture.

Man cannot attain his rights as his ultimate goal as long as judgement about human rights performance is not made free from the big powers' political ends.

Iran: Deputy Speaker Meets UN Human Rights Envoy

LD1002123996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 10 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Maurice Danby Copithorne, the UN special human rights envoy [to Iran], met Hasan Ruhani, the deputy speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles, on the first morning of his visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to the Central News Unit, Ruhani referred to the previous activities of the UN Human Rights Commission, saying: Various factors have led the people of Iran not to be optimistic about the work of this commission because human rights has gradually become a tool for big powers to apply political pressure on specific countries.

Ruhani added: We can see clearly the double standards [on human rights] of international organizations in a number of cases. For example, international bodies have not shown any reaction to the blatant interference of America in the internal affairs of various countries, especially Iran. He said one of the most clear examples of U.S. interference was the recent decision by the U.S. Congress to allocate a budget to interfere in Iran's affairs. He added: Despite these acts, international organizations have never criticized the United States.

Continuing, Ruhani pointed to repeated cases of human rights violations by the Zionist regime, saying: Despite the fact that this regime has violated all UN resolutions, despite its continuing occupation of the territories of a number of countries and despite the ceaseless massacre of the people of Palestine and southern Lebanon, unfortunately, international circles do not show any reaction to these crimes.

The deputy speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles then spoke of the special features of the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying: Very few governments have resorted to public opinion to decide the type of government straight after a revolution. He said: Despite the pressures imposed on us during the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war, the Islamic Republic of Iran never violated its Constitution and even held elections under the most critical conditions.

At the end of this meeting, the UN special envoy, too, pointed to the special features of Islamic Iran, saying: Iran is a country with a long history and a rich culture and recently experienced the Islamic revolution.

On his upcoming reports he said: My aim is to reflect reality and to produce a report on the real situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, even though sometimes facts can have objective or subjective aspects. I will try to stick to objective facts in an unbiased way considering the current conditions of your country to reflect reality.

Iran: Commentary Welcomes Visit of UN Human Rights Envoy

LD1002125696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 10 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Maurice Copithorne, the UN special human rights envoy, arrived in Tehran today at the invitation of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. [passage omitted]

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Following the announcement of the Islamic Republic of Iran that it would welcome UN human rights envoys, UN human rights envoys have visited our country to study freedom of speech and religious tolerance. These visits have been limited to specific cases. Copithorne's visit, however, has wider aspects. During his six-day stay in Iran, he can assess the various aspects of adhering to human rights.

Of course, the history of Iran's cooperation with the United Nations on human rights issues indicate that influential countries interfere and try to cause a disruption in this matter. They are trying to misuse so-called violations of human rights in Iran as a propaganda tool against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Disruption means that these countries publicize their political aims and intentions, as well as the imposition of their culture and way of life here, under the guise of human rights. Furthermore, they depict any opposition to this great sham as violations of human rights.

America, Israel, and a number of European countries depict Iran, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia as more or less violators of human rights because these countries adhere to the principles and beliefs that come from their own cultures and because they have stood up actively to the West's cultural onslaught.

As an example, in a report yesterday on the visit of the UN envoy to Tehran, REUTER devoted three lines out of a 43-line report to the visit itself, the rest of the report was devoted to repeating a statement by the terrorist Monafeqin [hypocrites; Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] who plant bombs and who serve America from Baghdad.

It is interesting that recently Britain, America, and the Zionist regime supported a [UN] resolution in which Islamic Iran was accused of violating human rights. This resolution, which was blatantly malicious, was even opposed by Copithorne. He announced openly that the resolution was wrong.

In any case, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with complete goodwill, with the belief that human rights — alongside peace and security — has become a victim to the greed of big powers and with the belief that the peoples of the world must remove the meaning of this lofty human value from the monopoly of the West, welcomes the visit of the UN special human rights envoy. The Islamic Republic of Iran hopes that he issues an honest and true report, thereby taking a step toward humanizing human rights and not allow human rights to become a toy in the domineering and bullying policies of big powers.

Iran: Rowhani Hopes for 'Accurate' Reporting in U.S.

LD1302142496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Louis Farrakhan, the leader of America's black Muslims, and his accompanying delegation attended today's open Majles session in order to familiarize themselves with the process of legislation in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Our correspondent reports that Majles Deputy Speaker Hasan Rowhani welcomed them and expressed the hope that the visit would prove to be a beginning for an accurate reporting of the realities of the Islamic revolution, the Islamic Republic's system, and the situation in Iran for the American people by independent and freethinking individuals.

Mr. Hasan Rowhani said: We are certain that, if this does come about, the people of the United States will not allow their rulers to adopt unreasonable decisions, violating international regulations, against an independent and free nation. The Majles deputy speaker added: We believe that the people of the United States, especially the Muslims and the blacks, are suffering from a kind of oppression and discrimination, because the U.S. Administration, the Zionists, and their propaganda organs do not permit an accurate reporting of the realities of the world, especially the world of Islam.

Iran: Possible U.S. Response to Anti-U.S. Threats Viewed

NC1302103996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 4 Feb 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iranian nation is preparing to mark the 17th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. This great, deep-rooted, popular, and vast revolution started against the shah's despotism and culminated with the crushing of the rule of America's wretched colonialism over Iran. Now, 17 years after those difficult days, the sapling of the revolution has grown into a strong tree with branches extending throughout the region and beyond.

The cries of our revolution are now echoing from the throats of oppressed people everywhere. This, when arrogance wanted the Islamic Revolution to be transformed into a defeated experience at its outset. Arrogance wanted the revolution to disintegrate from within. But many of our enemies took such wishes to their graves. On the eve of the 18th year since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the enemies of humanity have

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again included plans to overthrow the Islamic Republic in their current programs, which assign the CIA the duty of resorting to every possible crime and effort to overthrow the Islamic Revolution.

Experience shows that throughout these 17 years Washington has not abandoned its hostility toward the Islamic Revolution. The continuation of such blind hostility and such spiteful behavior cannot be considered anything new. But we should not forget that today we are no longer in the first years of the revolution and that the overt declaration of American enmity toward the Islamic Revolution only intensifies existing enmity for the revolution and Islam and should be answered as strongly as possible. Today, even CIA leaders and officials say they are not prepared to give in to Gingrich's childish plans; they fear such plans will backfire.

Richard Murphy, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, states in relation with this that America has been wrong in its calculations on Iran since the start. He sees issues from a broader perspective and says that without Iran's consent no peace can be implemented in the Middle East. France's presidential spokesman has pointed out that the economic-political sanctions America has in mind for Iran violate many international laws.

We should not forget that the strength of the Islamic Republic was, is, and will be the sole element for the defeat of American plans against Iran. In this restless world only popular backing can alter the balance of power to the benefit of the Islamic Revolution; the power of a nation is the biggest asset of statesmen who want to steer the ship of the revolution safely to the shores of victory through this restless sea of events.

As for America, Washington has never been happy with our revolution; throughout the past 17 years it has resorted to every means to perpetrate crimes and massacres against this nation and has hatched every possible plot. But this nation has very powerfully rubbed America's muzzle in the dirt and thwarted all of Washington's satanic plots.

Under such conditions, can Washington's new plan yield other results for America? The American strategists' answer to this question is negative. They fear that new anti-Iranian plans by Washington will anger the Iranian nation, lead to deterrent actions against America, and render Washington helpless amid the new anti-American threats. We should seriously consider such a likelihood.

Iran: Radio Commentary Views Farrakhan Visit

LD1202133096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 12 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Leader of the U.S. Black Muslims, Louis Farrakhan, who is visiting Tehran at the moment, participated in the celebrations of the 17th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution on Sunday February 11 and made a speech. [passage omitted]

Farrakhan organized a rally in Washington in October 1995 to protest the racial and social discrimination against Afro-Americans in American society.

Farrakhan's announcement in Tehran that Islam is a uniting and suitable model for the U.S. Black Muslims to adopt their life style is proof of the fact that the Islamic revolution has crossed the Iranian borders and is quickly spreading among the Muslim nations throughout the world. This expansion results from the fact that one of the Islamic Republic foreign policy priorities is to support the Muslims and the oppressed of the world.

The conduct of the Islamic Republic system during the post revolutionary years actually confirms this point that support for the Bosnian Muslims and also efforts during the crisis in the Islamic countries like Afghanistan and Tajikistan are examples in point regarding this policy.

Anyway, as Iranian President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said in the ceremony honoring the 17th anniversary of the Islamic revolution, this revolution supports all the oppressed Muslims of the world of all races and nationalities. And Farrakhan speaks for more than 30 million oppressed Afro-American Muslims.

Iran: Commentary Criticizes U.S. Influence in Sudan

LD1102135396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 11 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. Under Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau on Thursday 8 February, met and conferred with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo. Further talks were supposed to focus on the peace trend in the Middle East. Political analysts believe that the U.S. under secretary of state's visit to Cairo has certain links with the issue of Sudan and pressures exerted on that country.

Since the abortive assassination attempt on Husni Mubarak, which took place during the Egyptian president's trip to Ethiopian capital for an African Unity Conference in 1995, all-out pressures are being exerted

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on Sudan by Egypt and its Western allies. Egypt accuses Sudan of having had a hand in the assassination attempt. The Sudanese Government, which is a Muslim country, has an independent policy and is constantly being considered a great threat to the region by Egypt and Cairo. Therefore, the assassination attempt has cleared the way for further pressures on the Sudanese Government by Cairo and its allies. However, the UN Security Council, under pressure by Egypt and the U.S., ratifying Resolution 1,044, threatened Sudan to turn in the suspect involved in Husni Mubarak's assassination attempt in Ethiopia.

Elsewhere the U.S. has recalled its ambassador and diplomats from Sudan under the pretext that it fears insecurity for its subjects. Political observers view the main reason behind America's ratification of Resolution 1,044 against Sudan and the recall of its diplomats from Khartoum merely the weakening of the central government in Sudan and the partition of that country. The U.S. tries, on the one hand, to beef-up rebels in southern Sudan and, on the other, by weakening the Muslim government of Sudan, divide the country so that it can gain more clout in that country by setting up a Christian government in southern Sudan.

The U.S. under secretary of state's visit to Egypt can be assessed in the same line.

Iran: Velayati on Saudi, Iraqi, U.S. Ties

NC1102113996 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 3 Feb 96 p 12

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati by correspondent Homeyra Hoseyni-Yeganeh; place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Since the main occasion for this interview is the auspicious Ten Days of Dawn, my first question concerns the principles and objectives of the Islamic Revolution. How successful do you think the Islamic Republic has been in achieving the most basic objective of the revolution — that is, independence?

[Velayati] One of the most important achievements of the Islamic Revolution was the re-establishment of true independence in Iran after two centuries. no other revolution or movement in other countries, one of whose objectives was to end foreign domination, have been able so successful. But the Islamic Revolution has been successful in this. Undoubtedly, this is the most important achievement of the revolution.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Now, 17 years after the Islamic Revolution, what is your assessment of the position that Iran enjoys in the international system?

[Velayati] Today Iran — as an Islamic country — enjoys the most significant reputation among its friends and those who are not its friends. Its friends recognize the greatness of this system, and its foes must admit it. Of course, there are various reasons for this, but the biggest is that Iran's independence and power since the Islamic Revolution is unprecedented in the world. Iran's cultural, historic, political, geographic, and economic potentials are other elements that have helped us to gain this extremely important position. Iran's population is over 60 million and has sea or land borders with 15 countries. It is situated at the juncture of three continents — Africa, Asia, and Europe — and it neighbors the big power blocs and centers. Iran was able to successfully pass through the most difficult phases in its history. Iran's proud victory in the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war gave the world an outstanding image of Iran. These events coincided with the power shifts in the world. We should also add regional issues to this list. Since the Persian Gulf crisis, Iran's significance in the region and in the world has been increasing.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Is this due to the shifting power balance in the international system or because of a change in the power structure in Iran because of the Islamic Revolution?

[Velayati] The Islamic Revolution and changes inside Iran played the largest role. The Islamic Revolution has increased Iran's international significance.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] The power structure in the international system is changing. Some foresee the emergence of a new division in the world into two poles — one that believes in divine religions and one that does not. In your opinion, what is the Islamic Revolution's role in the evolution of such a structure?

[Velayati] We probably cannot say for sure that such a split will definitely emerge. There is also the theory of culture clashes. This theory says the various cultures will be pitted against each other. Another theory foresees coexistence among cultures. Therefore, it is very difficult to foresee the political future of the world in view of the developments in the world.

In the future world, which is not very far away, the West will no longer be the sole power. Other civilizations will get an opportunity to prosper, and Islamic identity will definitely be in a more prominent position in the future. Also, the Asian culture will be more prominent in the future. Today Australia with its Western culture is insisting on solidarity with the Asians, and it has major influence in the Indian Ocean and the Asian Cooperation Organization.

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Also, Australia's interest shows that Asia will have a brighter future in world affairs.

One of the blessings of the Islamic Revolution is the revival of Islam and of Islamic values in the present era. The impact of the Islamic Revolution has not been and is not limited to Iran; it has had spectacular repercussions throughout the world — something even its opponents admit.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Recently the Saudi defense minister expressed readiness to establish better relations with Iran. In the history of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy there have been many ups and downs in Tehran-Riyadh relations. It seems that in determining its foreign policy and relations with neighboring countries, Saudi Arabia has always taken the foreigners' wishes into consideration instead of collective regional interests and has turned to regional countries only at times of crisis and when at an impasse. In your opinion, what impasse is Saudi Arabia facing now that caused it to announced its readiness for better relations with Tehran?

[Velayati] I agree that Iranian-Saudi relations have been through many ups and downs. But the interests of Iran, of Saudi Arabia, and of the region dictate that both countries should have good ties. This is the only way we can advance toward our regional objectives. The Saudi and Iranian foreign policies are not in line, but both sides are trying to reduce their differences and to strengthen common points in a bid to bring tranquility to the Persian Gulf and to deny the expansionists any pretexts. This will lead to a reduced foreign military presence in the region.

As for the world of Islam, we are trying to have good relations with all Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia. We saw a good example of cooperation among the Islamic countries on the Bosnian issue.

We accept the Saudi defense minister's call for closness with Iran. Tehran-Riyadh relations will definitely alter the atmosphere in the region.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] There have been recent reports of an upcoming visit by the German foreign minister to Tehran. In view of the ambiguities in the two countries' relations, how do you assess the future of these relations?

[Velayati] Iranian-German relations have been an object of American pressure. Of course, the Americans do not want us to have relations with any country. If Iran's foreign relations proceed successfully, they will become a successful and practical model for all countries that do not want to be under America's domination. This is because the current propaganda around the world is that if a country opposes America it will have tremendous problems.

Currently there are good commercial-industrial relations between Iran and Germany. The Germans do not have a history of colonialism in this country, hence the public favors expanded relations between the two.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] After the approval of the $20-million fund in the U.S. Congress, you and other foreign policy officials remarked that if Congress does not repeal this bill, Iran will take the United States to an international court. Have the preliminary steps been taken for this? Also, in view of America's threats and plots against Iran, don't you consider America to be a threat to the Islamic Republic?

[Velayati] We are preparing to take legal action. But this takes time. The Foreign Ministry's legal departments are examining this case. But as to whether America is a threat to Iran, I should say that America is not a threat to our revolution because our revolution is too strong to be harmed by such threats. However, these threats and plots do put pressure on our country. Of course, this is not a one-sided issue. Ever since the victory of the revolution Iran has also been putting serious pressure on America. America has done many things against Iran. Iran likewise has defended itself. The mere existance of a country like Iran in a region where America covets so much is a big source of tension in itself. The existence of a serious and viable model like Iran which is becoming stronger each day is not in the interest of America's global policies in the contemporary world and among the Islamic countries.

They think that if Iran achieves its objectives, it will become a practical model for the world. Actually they consider Iran to be a potential threat to their illegitimate interests. Of course, the Americans should revise their outlook and be more realistic in their policy-making.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] In view of America's hostility against Iran, how do you assess the future relations between these two countries?

[Velayati] Due to the structure of their government, as well as the influences in Washington, it does not seem likely that American policy toward Iran in the near future — especially until the coming presidential elections — will change, since the two contending parties are blindly trying to draw public attention. This shows how they ignore their country's interests and only pay attention to their party's interests. Therefore, there will be no change in the relations between Iran and America. Iran is also reluctant to resume ties with America. But at the same time, we do not intend to increase tension with them. The Americans themselves

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are guilty of making trouble and worsening matters. Iran is not responsible for creating and intensifying tension.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Some say that the Islamic Republic's problems on international affairs and the existing ups and downs in relations with other countries stem from the weakness in Iranian-American relations. What do you think?

[Velayati] We are not facing any problems, impasses, or ups and downs in our relations with various countries that are to some extent in line with our path. Of course, there are pressures on us, but this is the price that we pay for independence and for having revived Islamic values. Some say that if we do not have any tension in our relations with America, all our problems in the world will be solved. This is not correct. Some pressures may be reduced, but we would have to lose what we have today. The rapprochement between the Eastern bloc and the West since the disintegration of communism created unprecedented problems for the former. The return to power of communism in the Eastern Bloc shows their disappointment with the West. And this is just one bit of proof for those people who think that the establishment of relations with America would open the doors of paradise to us.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] It is said that some of our foreign policy problems stem from religious commitments and that if the foreign policy architects would only think of our national interests, our current problems would be solved. What about that?

[Velayati] Those who say this have a mistaken interpretaton of nationalism in Iran. In Iran, nationalism is not separate from religion. If we consider Islam to be just one of the many elements that affect Iranian nationalism, we will be breaking a major pillar. A glance at history shows us that uniformity and unity was attained in Iran only after the unification of religion during the Safavid Dynasty. In the current age too, wherever a nationalist movement has had a religious color and content, it has been successful, whereas without it nothing has been achieved. We have been defeated whenever religion has been excluded. As for the fact that in some closed rooms and in some forums opinions are voiced about separating nationalism and religion in Iran, these are all will-of-the-wisps. In the real world, no such things happen. Even in pre-Islamic Iran, religion was considered to be a main pillar in authority. I think we should be willing to pay the price if we want to make valuable achievements. After two centuries this country has achieved true independence. Today no one outside our borders issues orders to us. However, throughout Iran's history, political leaders have always been dependent and the country has been fully under foreign influence. If we want a bright future for this country, we should definitely be willing to suffer some pressures for the sake of independence.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Iraq has a special place in our foreign policy and among our people. On the one hand, most of our differences and conflicts have been with it. Iraq has been considered a regional rival. On the other hand, there is a Shiite population in that country and the people sincerely wish to visit the holy shrines there. In these auspicious Ten Days of Dawn, do you have any good news for the people regarding this, and have the bilateral talks been positive so far?

[Velayati] Unimpeded access to the holy shrines for the people has always been the sincere wish of the Iranian nation, and we have made efforts in this direction. Such issues cannot be solved unilaterally; they are part of Iranian-Iraqi relations. Tehran-Baghdad relations are complicated and complex. Constructive steps have been taken by both sides, and in coming days the committees in charge of searching for bodies [of soldiers killed during the Iran-Iraq war] are to resume their activities. Although progress has been slow, the preliminary measures have been taken. This process will take time and the good will of both sides.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Some time ago you responded to a question from some university students by saying that Dr. Sorush had created problems for the country's foreign policy. These remarks sparked off many comments about whether a powerful country like the Islamic Republic, which has a leadership role among the Islamic countries, can be harmed by the remarks of a university professor. What did you base your remarks on?

[Velayati] I was asked a question and I answered it. The fact is that the extent to which an act at home can affect foreign policy merits further discussion. I, who am on the foreign scene more than most and see how various elements are lying in ambush in hopes of weakening our country, should help the people to understand foreign realities better. Discussions that are merely scientific and social in nature are not only not harmful, but good. But if in the process of this we ignore its repercussions, this definitely is unacceptable. Each remark has its specific repercussions, depending on the time and place that it is made. If a person is responsible, he should sit down and consider if his acts will have more pros or more cons. Anyone can express his opinion. And if I, in my capacity as a foreign policy official, am asked whether such remarks at home have an impact abroad, it is my duty to give my assessment of the situation.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] One of the major topics of the day is the elections and the statement by the officials. You were not among the officials who signed this statement.

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Please give us your opinion on the list of candidates to be put forth by the country's executive officials.

[Velayati] The elections are extremely important and all the people should be encouraged to participate in them actively and seriously. If the people cooperate actively and extensively in the Majles elections, the future of the country will be better ensured and we will see more progress in our country. This calls for the people's enthusiasm and zeal.

As for that statement, in the beginning I thought that the members of the Executive Branch should submit a list like the ordinary people who have no executive duties, because even if they just submitted a list and nothing else was done to ensure the victory of the candidates proposed in the list, it would make the public suspicious that since the people who tendered the list are ministers, they have the necessary means and strength to exert influence, although all the ministers have been approved by the Majles and would never do anything like that. But this suspicion would arise among groups that submit a list of candidates but are unable to gain the necessary votes.

But if the list put forth by the ministers does not receive the necessary votes and other people win those seats, the majority in the Majles would be made up of people who were not on the ministers' list. This would mean that there is a minority government in the country, and that for the remaining year or more, the general belief would be that the deputies of the Fifth Majles do not approve of the current government.

I stated this opinion to the gentlemen who signed the statement.

Also, this issue created a type of split in the government; and even though our government is extremely strong and united under the powerful leadership of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, those outside the government would get the wrong impression that the cabinet is split. And it is not in the interests of any government to create such an impression.

The call by the officials encouraging the people to participate in the elections is extremely good, but there is no need for us to do anything to hurt the feelings of some people, especially of the Majles, simply in order to encourage the people to participate in the elections. In other words, it is possible to do this in a more friendly manner. However, the issue ended there; and with the directives of the esteemed leader and the president, the issue reached an amicable conclusion and the rancor that had arisen was overcome.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] You are unofficially being referred to as one of the presidential candidates. But you yourself have denied this on several occasions. Since we still have a year or so until the elections, why do you insist on denying this possibility?

[Velayati] I am already offering my services as an official serving the country, so if I strive to do my duties better and to solve the foreign policy problems, I will offer more tangible and clearer service. Some individuals themselves declare their candidacy; that is one way. But at least I do not fall into the category of those who are volunteering.

[Hoseyni-Yeganeh] Thank you for having devoted your time to us.

Iran: Commentary on UN-Iraqi Talks, New Resolution

NC1302094796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 13 Feb 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] While talks between Iraq and the United Nations regarding the implementation of Resolution 986 continue, the Security Council members have put the draft of another resolution on Iraq on their agenda.

In the new resolution Iraq's level of imports and exports of industrial machinery, equipment, and technology are to be specified. The backers of this new resolution, including the United States, consider it complements the current regime for supervising Iraq's arsenal on the basis of Resolution 687, which is why they want it approved.

This group claims that with the approval of the current resolution, supervision over the Iraqi arsenal of weapons of mass destruction will be complete and that country will be unable to obtain such arms. While Security Council Resolution 687 provides for Iraq's disarmament with regard to weapons of mass destruction, particularly military technology in Iraq, the newly proposed resolution also provides for monitoring dual-purpose technology.

Dual-purpose technology means types of technology that can be utilized in both military and nonmilitary sectors. Accordingly, with the approval of the new resolution, the Security Council will be able to extend the scope of its supervision and control over Iraq. Not only can it control the ordnance industries on the basis of Resolution 687, but also nonmilitary industries on the pretext that these have dual capabilities and can be used by the military sector. This will restrict Iraq more than ever and erode the Iraqi government's sovereignty over imports, exports, and industries.

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Observers believe that with the approval of such a resolution, the Iraqi government will loose its right to industrial progress, and the country's industries will come under the control of the major powers. Moreover, the submission of this new resolution on Iraq while talks on Resolution 986 are still underway can put pressure on Iraq.

The permanent members of the Security Council who insist on unconditional implementation of Resolution 986 have proposed this new resolution so they can exert greater pressure on Iraq and force it to accept it in toto.

On the other hand, the restrictions provided for by the new resolution can be construed as a precursor to the lifting of some of the sanctions on Iraq's importing some materials and machinery after the resumption of limited oil exports once under Resolution 986.

Iran: German Nuclear Expert Said To Be in Tehran

MM1202124296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Alan George: "Tehran Follows Baghdad on German Expert's Route; West Alarmed at Reports of Nuclear Spy's Arrival in Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — Fears have increased recently over the possible presence of a German nuclear energy expert in Tehran, which is aspiring to produce nuclear weapons. Reports say that this expert had previously supplied Saddam Husayn with the most serious secrets of nuclear bombs and their designs, as reported by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT recently and confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] later.

A Western official monitoring the proliferation of nuclear weapons has said that these reports "are very bad, if they are correct. The Iranians are seeking to produce a nuclear bomb, but they lack accurate designs and high-tech skills."

It was revealed last year that the nuclear expert had supplied the Iraqis with the latest developments concerning the design of the uranium enrichment system, known as "TS-11," developed by a consortium of British, German, and Dutch companies. This information was uncovered when the IAEA, entrusted with inspecting Iraqi nuclear secrets, obtained a number of documents concerning these designs.

Baghdad handed over these documents last summer in the wake of the defection to Jordan of General Husayn Kamil, the Iraqi president's son-in-law, who was in charge of Iraqi military development programs.

It is worth mentioning that enriched weapons-grade uranium can be obtained by exposing uranium hexafluoride gas to a series of extremely rapid centrifugal actions.

The consortium was set up in 1970 to end the three partners' (Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands) reliance on the United States in obtaining enriched uranium for their nuclear power stations. The nuclear expert in question worked for a German company that participated in conducting the research to develop the TS-11 system.

The German authorities intend to charge this man with treason. But they still have not been able to arrest him. Some reports say that he spent a long period in Brazil after his departure from Baghdad following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. He was also seen in the Canary Islands last year. And there are indications that he headed for Tehran from there.

The expert in question was convicted of violating German export regulations when he supplied Iraq with some centrifugal equipment. He personally supervised the production of the equipment in his home, which contains a complete modern workshop.

The Iranians deny that they are seeking to produce nuclear weapons, but no one believes these claims. Tehran has made several attempts to obtain "dual-use" equipment, that is equipment used for both peaceful purposes and for producing nuclear weapons. However, Western surveillance organizations, which have become more efficient because of their experience with Iraq, have prevented other states from embarking on a repetition of the Baghdad experience, since Baghdad managed to obtain these technologies from the West. Iran's attempts to obtain this equipment from Western states were doomed to failure, which is why it has recently turned to the countries of the Far East, whose technologies are not as advanced as those of Western states.

Dr. Claus Maisir [name as transliterated], executive chairman of the consortium Arinco [as transliterated], has said that the consortium "is currently conducting an investigation into the issue to determine the truth about what happened. However, the outcome of the investigation depends on the details we are going to receive."

Iran: 'Strong Protest' to Turkey Over MKO Rally

LD1202141396 Tehran IRNA in English 1403 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 12, IRNA — The Turkish ambassador to Tehran was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on Monday and asked to convey Iran's strong protest to his government at Ankara's permission

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to the terrorist MKO [Mojahedin-e Khalq organization] outfit to stage an anti-Iran demonstration in that country.

In a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, the Turkish diplomat was told that Iran expected Ankara to give explanations in this regard.

On the 17th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran on Sunday which was celebrated by its supporters worldwide a group of MKO terrorists staged a demonstration against the Islamic Republic of Iran after receiving a permission from the Turkish Government. This is the first time the Turkish Government has let the grouplet stage anti-Islamic demonstrations in the country.

Iran: MKO Denies Holding Rally in Turkey

NC1202223196 Paris AFP in English 2147 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 12 (AFP) — Iran's main armed opposition group on Monday [12 February] denied holding a rally in Turkey after Ankara's ambassador in Tehran was summoned to the foreign ministry over the affair.

"The Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization [MKO] of Iran denies any form of involvement in any demonstrations in Turkey and questions the validity of the news generated by the mullah's news agency in Tehran," it said in a statement to AFP.

Earlier the official Iranian news agency IRNA said Iran had lodged a strong protest with Turkey for allowing the group to hold a rally on its soil, saying it was the first time Ankara had authorized an anti-Iranian demonstration.

The foreign ministry summoned Turkish ambassador, Mithat Balkan, to protest the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization's "anti-Islamic act" in Turkey on the 17th anniversary of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution on Sunday. IRNA did not say where the rally was held.

Tehran and Ankara signed a cooperation pact in June not to support each other's opponents. Turkey has asked Iran to stop rebels of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been waging a fierce battle against Ankara for independence, from using Iran to launch attacks. Tehran has in return called on Ankara to stop the activities of the Iraq-based Mojahedin, which seeks to topple Iran's Islamic leadership.

Iran: Paper on Ankara's 'Subservience' To West

LD1302071296 Tehran IRNA in English 0703 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 13, IRNA — Ankara has swallowed all sorts of humiliation heaped upon it by the west, even at the expense of the aspirations and ideals of its citizens, the English morning daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' wrote on Tuesday [13 February].

The paper in its editorial condemned the decision of Turkey allowing the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) to hold anti-Iran rallies simultaneous with ceremonies in Iran marking the anniversary of the Islamic revolution.

"Such a show of sympathy with the terrorist group stems partly from Ankara's subservience to certain interest groups in the west that are under pressure from their big business patrons, and partly from the Turkish desire to join the European Union (EU)," it stated.

Noting that the Ankara government cannot afford to continue ignoring the Islamic ideals of its people, it added that Turkish Muslims are already reacting to the anti-Islamic stance of their government by casting their votes for the Refah Party in the recent parliamentary polls held in the country.

"Suppressing people's sentiments and religious attachments will definitely backfire," the daily cautioned, saying that if Turkey heeded the feelings of its people, it must distance itself from the MKO as Ankara stands to be hurt if it espoused a similar attitude the next time around.

Iran: List of POW's To Be Exchanged With Iraq

LD1302071796 Tehran IRNA in English 0710 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 13, IRNA — Iran and Iraq will exchange list of the prisoners of war at a location on Iran-Iraq border today, said senior advisor to foreign minister 'Ali Khorram to the Persian daily 'IRAN' Tuesday [13 February]. This comes following agreements reached between the two sides. The list will be exchanged by the representatives of Iranian and Iraqi committees in charge of tracing the pows. The move will enable both countries to settle the fate of the remaining POWs of the 1980-88 Iraqi-imposed war.

On Tehran-Baghdad ties, Khorram said that the two countries are working out ways to settle the problems and measures are being taken in this connection. However, he said, the efforts have not produced any new result. On postponement of the visit to Baghdad by

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Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, he said, "we are waitig for appropriate conditions."

Iran: Tension in Ties With Bahrain Discussed

NC1302083496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 3 Feb 96 p 24

[Political commentary: "Manama: The Vicious Circle of Emotional Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Late last week the Bahraini Interior Ministry announced that one of the Islamic Republic Embassy's diplomats in Manama is to be expelled on charges of undiplomatic behavior!

The same day, Iran reciprocated, ordering the expulsion of a Bahraini diplomat.

During the current [Iranian] year [ending 20 March 1996] Manama has indirectly linked its domestic problems with its foreign policy on Tehran. This link is affected by everything: worsening domestic unrest; protests by people demanding political participation; the interests of extraregional governments and powers; and the evil propaganda by some Arab and Western circles with a long history of enmity toward the revolutionary government of Iran.

In confronting its domestic crisis, Manama lacks both the necessary strength to crush its opponents and the necessary capability to display political leniency to calm them. Therefore, the extent of the crisis is growing daily. The blind knot of the crisis of legitimacy and of political participation is directly linked with the absence of capability and lack of legitimacy of the rulers and of the political structure in Bahrain. Al Khalifah wants to make up for his incapability by using foreign suppressive forces and portraying the genuine popular movement as subversion influenced by foreign elements to overshadow the crisis of legitimacy. And the news-disseminating organs of the reactionary Arabs and of the interfering West are in unison with Al Khalifah on the implementation of this policy.

While Bahrain is unable to crush domestic opposition, a regional suppressive force rushes to the aid of Manama's interior Ministry. American, Saudi, and Egyptian advisers are to command the suppressive force, since meeting the people's demands will be a major blow to the regional interests of America and to the beginning of a dynamic movement that will shake the pillars of family despotism and of a one-man democracy from Riyadh to Cairo.

The expulsion of the Iranian diplomat and the further tension in Manama-Tehran relations were not unexpected. Bahrain's undiplomatic attempt in expelling the third secretary of the Islamic Republic's Embassy in Manama is a sign of the depth of the political crisis the Bahraini Government is facing. With this act, Manama has come up with an equation for political circles to use when calculating the extent of domestic crisis in Bahrain and in proportion with the quarrelsome nature of that country's diplomacy. Bahrain's political overtures against Iran can act as a guide for political circles when it comes to assessing the unrest in that country. All these things are happening at a time when everybody knows that the truth goes beyond this artificial link created by Al Khalifah, who has only further revealed his weaknesses.

The greater the extent of the crisis in Bahrain, the more Manama will continue its emotional overtures within this two-sided policy. But how long can this vicious circle prevent the reality from taking shape?

Iran: Commentary on Saudi-Egyptian Talks

LD1102140896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egypt's President Husni Mubarak, on Saturday February 10, arrived in Saudi Arabia on a brief visit. He has so far held talks with the Saudi Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. Though no reliable news has been released on the two parties' talks, political analysts maintain talks between Husni Mubarak and the Saudi prince have focused on bilateral ties and regional issues.

The Saudi Government has pledged Mubarak to incorporate some Egyptian workers into its labor force. However, due to specific problems in Saudi Arabia, it seems that he has no option but to renege on his promises. Since the presence of Egyptian forces abroad is of special significance to Egypt's economy, it is natural for it to be concerned over the situation of its workers in Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia. Elsewhere, presently Egypt is facing grave threats by its opposers from within. Saudi Arabia, too, is facing similar security problems within its own borders. Therefore, the establishment of coordination and taking of security measures between the two sides is an issue which seems will be discussed in talks held between the Saudi prince and Husni Mubarak.

Elsewhere, regional problems and issues, including sanctions imposed by UN Security Council against Iraq, is among matters of special significance in talks held between Arab leaders. Saudi Arabia has shown tough stance toward an ease or lifting of sanctions against Iraq for the exit of Iraq from oil purchasing countries has led Saudi Arabia to fill in the void. This itself has brought about an increase in that country's income. At present talks held between the United Nations and Iraq over a

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limited sale of Iraq's oil worth $2 billion — so that Iraq provide its starving people with foodstuffs — cannot be in Saudi's interests. At any rate, in view of matters puzzling the public opinion and international ties over the critical condition prevailing over Iraq, a lifting or ease of the sanctions is considered a must. Hence, it seems Saudi Arabia should reconsider its tough stance toward Iraq. Based on this, it seems that the matter has been reviewed in part of Husni Mubarak and Prince 'Abdallah's discussions.

Other issues touched upon between the two could have been [the] so-called peace talks held between Syria and the Zionist regime, Yemen and Eritrea's dispute over the Hanish Island and the Sudan issue.

Iran: Tehran Seeks Peace Formula in Afghanistan

LD1102155996 Tehran IRNA in English 1537 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 11, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran is striving for a peace formula in Afghanistan that will hopefully be acceptable to all warring parties in that country, according the current issue of the weekly JIHAD. The two countries, the weekly says, share borders with each other in addition to the same religious faith, and cultural and historical background which seems sufficient for a successful intermediation by Iran.

Organ of the Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, PAYAM JIHAD, writes in its editorial that the frequent visits of the Iranian deputy foreign minister for Asian and Oceania affairs, 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, to Afghanistan suggest a more substantial success of Iran in its mediation for brokering a collective peaceful settlement of Afghan crisis than that of Mahmoud Mestiri's, the UN special envoy to Afghanistan or other international community mediators such as the Organization of Islamic Conferences for that matter.

The weekly says the slow phasing out of the war in the northern region of Afghanistan, the temporary undeclared armistice between the government and the opposition, the initiation of negotiation and bringing about of mutual understanding between the different factions are all attributed to the efforts of the Iranian deputy foreign minister, Borujerdi.

PAYAM JIHAD goes on to say that the four-year mission of the UN envoy to bring about peace settlement in Afghanistan has failed.

The organ of the Islamic movement points out that Borujerdi has not only been to Mazar-i-Sharif, Bamian, Jalal Abad and Kabul on peace missions to mediate between the different groups but that he has also tried to resolve the current crisis between the two neighboring countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The weekly finally adds that Iran being also aware of the problems between Afghanistan and Pakistan and of the crisis between the two neighboring countries is trying to resolve it relying on her own political astuteness and insightedness of the region.

PAYAM JIHAD has concluded by saying that if the Iranian deputy foreign minister can successfully defuse the crisis between Pakistan and Afghanistan, then there will be still better reason to hope that Iran can collaborate with other international mediating teams for a final solution acceptable to all sides in the present crisis in that country.

Iran: Mohajerani—6 of G-16 Can Campaign in Election

LD1302120396 Tehran IRNA in English 0743 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 13, IRNA — Vice president in charge of executive affairs, 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani, said Monday [12 February] that his group will present a list of candidates for the fifth Majles elections adding that the announcement of the Guardians Council's supervisory board barring senior officials from advocating any candidate does not apply to G-6. [as received]

In an interview with IRNA, he stated that six of the 16 on the G-16 [Servants of Reconstruction] list are not covered by the election laws which bar government officials from participating in the voting process.

According to the law, vice-presidents, as well as the mayor of Tehran and the governor of the Central Bank of Iran, may announce their support and campaign for any candidate as long as they do not use their official titles and designation. Head of the central committee of the Guardians Council's supervisory board, Ayatollah Gholam-Reza Rezvani, said in a letter to the Interior Ministry Sunday that nominating candidates for Majles election or launching any kind of propaganda by presidential deputies and other officials in support of any candidate, will be in violation of the election law.

Mohajerani opined that there was nothing new to executive officials introducing candidates for elections, noting that the heads of the three branches of government are members of the Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association], which will issue its own list of candidates.

He stressed that his group's motivation for participation in the election was to create a lively atmosphere for

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voting, adding that they also want to make the Majles free from domination of a special group.

Iran: Mohtashemi Sees Elections as 'Right-Wing' Power Struggle

MM0902140796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Ghassan al-Tahir: "Mohtashemi Tells AL-HAYAH: Rafsanjani's Supporters To Win If Khamene'i Does Not Interfere"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — Former Iranian Interior Minister 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi says that all the indications are that all President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's supporters will score a clear victory in the parliamentary elections scheduled for next month.

He told AL-HAYAH that the general atmosphere in the country leads one to believe that the "16" group (cabinet members and state officials who support Rafsanjani) will be able to win the majority of the Islamic Shura Majles seats and defeat the traditional right-wing groups.

He added that, although the right wing controls the main sectors of the state and the administration, the public mood is ready for extending support to the elements of the new trend behind Rafsanjani and that "this development has long been expected, with the emerging signs that the right wing is ailing and that its continuous attempts to control everything and exclude others who are opposed to it have certainly failed." But he added that "interference by 'Ali Khamene'i at the last moment could change many things in favor of the Military Clergy Association (the religious right wing)."

He denied that such interference means a decision by him [Khamene'i], as leader of the Islamic Republic and jurisconsult with maximum constitutional powers, changing the election results and preventing some candidates from taking part. He said: "There has been no rigging of the Shura Majles results even in the past round in which we members of the left were defeated, but by interference I meant influencing public opinion with a word of sympathy for the Militant Clergy Association or with open criticism of the technocrat elements supporting Rafsanjani. That would be a guide to the public, who are highly influenced by what Khamene'i says."

Mohtashemi, however, believes that that is unlikely to happen and believes that Khamene'i will open the way for an election battle "that would motivate the public to participate and vote." He added: "Although I know that Khamene'i does not like the religious technocrat and liberal groups, he is likely to refrain from direct open guidance and to leave it to the various executive and control institutions to do their job."

He stressed that Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani, leader of the Military Clergy Association, has, despite his views which are often in disagreement with the views of the current Majles Speaker Shaykh Nateq-Nuri, "strongly supports him in these elections because he is vehemently opposed to the liberal group around Rafsanjani and believes that some members of that group have deviated from religion despite the religious and revolutionary slogans they raise."

But Mohtashemi, one of the leaders of the radical religious left, describes the election battle as "a struggle for power between the right-wing factions because Rafsanjani's cabinet members and supporters are all right wing, but the problem is that the traditional right-wing elements have not given these right-wing technocrats even the narrowest cooperation margin. That is in addition to the fact that Rafsanjani wants to strengthen his position." He said that a victory for Rafsanjani's supporters in these elections "would strengthen Rafsanjani's position but defeat for them would put a harsh political end to Rafsanjani."

On the participation of the factions of the religious left, their different positions, and the fact that some, like the Islamic Revolution's Mojahedin Organization led by Behzad Nabavi, are calling for effective participation and the introduction of candidates while other leftist groups are opposed to participation in the elections, Mohtashemi emphasized that the position of the Militant Clerics Society (the religious political cover of the leftist groups) would not change and that he personally has worked hard over the past two months to persuade the various influential figures of the revolutionary left not to put forward any candidates for election "because we do not want to allow anyone to exploit our participation politically or in the media or to do anything to defeat us." He said that "the people will in the future realize the importance of our presence in power and in the state, but I fear that those who make the real decisions may be late in realizing this fact."

He denied earlier reports about meetings and direct contacts between leaders of the Military Clerics Society, especially former Speaker Shaykh Mehdi Karrubi, and Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i to discuss the possible participation of the Military Clerics Society in the elections.

Meanwhile, Dr. Zahra Mustavawi, daughter of Imam Khomeyni and secretary general of the Islamic Women's Association, has announced that she will effectively participate in the coming elections and will submit an election list. She said: "Our list will include the names of committed men and women with a history

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of jihad and long revolutionary experience in various fields regardless of the influential political trends they belong to." Imam Khomeyni's daughter is a university professor.

Iran: Nabavi Claims Rightist Faction Plans To Seize Majles Majority

LD1202100696 Tehran IRNA in English 0850 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 12, IRNA — A founding member of the Islamic Revolution Mojahedeen Organization of Iran (IRMOI), Behzad Nabavi, accused the rightist faction of planning to seize the majority in the Majlis. In an interview with the morning daily 'IRAN NEWS' on Monday, he, however, refrained from identifying the faction by name. If they succeeded in gaining a majority in the next parliament, they would then be able to continue exercising a strong presence in the executive branch of the government, he noted.

Stressing that the candidacy list of his faction was still incomplete, Nabavi reiterated that those who firmly believe in the late imam's line or those with leftist leanings would receive the support of IRMOI.

Serving in the cabinet of four prime ministers since the victory of the Islamic revolution, he added that IRMOI would suceed in having seven or eight members elected to the next parliament.

Nabavi asserted however that the traditional right would not be able to keep a strong majority in the upcoming Majlis.

Iran: Liberation Movement Candidates Rejected by Council

LD1302081996 Tehran IRNA in English 0758 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 13, IRNA — The Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) on Monday [12 February] strongly protested a decision taken by the supervisory council which rejected most of the LMI candidates that it fielded for the parliamentary elections, the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' reported Tuesday. According to the daily, the LMI, in a statement issued here, said the council rejected more than 80 percent of its candidates for the March 8 polls.

AFP has reported that LMI Secretary General Ebrahim Yazdi and former Interior Minister Hashem Sabaghian were among the accepted candidates from the group. The LMI statement further stated that a "final decision" on the elections would be taken later on.

The eligibility of some 5,000 registered candidates was decided on Monday, the daily said, adding that the candidates "were thoroughly screened by the Council of Guardians, a body that supervises the election process, to see whether or not they met all required criteria" to stand for election.

One-third of 3,000 candidates who registered in the 1992 polls were not accepted, 'TEHRAN TIMES' noted, stating that those rejected reserve the right to appeal.

Iran: Parliamentarians Appreciate Antiembezzlement Efforts

LD1202205896 Tehran IRNA in English 2043 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 12, IRNA — A large group of MPs on Monday appreciated the efforts of the judiciary and the management of Saderat Bank in handling the issue of embezzlement.

In their letter to head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the MPs thanked the judicial officials, executive officials, managing-director of Saderat Bank, ministers of information, finance and economical affairs for their assistance to detect the embezzlement.

The embezzlement came to light last summer. Tehran's public court examined the case and sentenced the main figure behind the fraud, Fazel Khodadad to death and his two accomplices, Morteza Rafiqdoust and 'Abu Taleb Ebrahimi to life in prison.

Other accomplices in the Saderat Bank embezzlement got varying degrees of punishment and heavy fines plus imprisonment.

Iran: Press on 'Massive Turnout' in Revolution Anniversary Rally

LD1202113896 Tehran IRNA in English 1046 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 12, IRNA — The editorials of two Persian morning dailies on Monday commented on the massive turnout and glorious participation of the stalwart Iranian people in the rally marking the 17th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution of Iran on February 11.

The editorial of 'IRAN' said that the Iranian people from all walks of life and all age groups participated in a grand rally, demonstrating their political maturity and cultural dignity. They reiterated their firm resolution and historic decision to safeguard the magnificent divine pledge, the Islamic revolution.

Yesterday, the sky over Iran witnessed the call by the Iranian nation upholding Islam and yearning for justice to dominate the earth. The devoted people underlined

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the pursuing of the revolutionary line and preserving the achievements of the Islamic revolution under the leadership of Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i.

"The Iranian nation deserves to be the model of spiritual perfection for the Islamic community in the present era, to be followed by the world Muslims," the editorial stressed.

The editorial of 'JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI' pointed out that, on Sunday, the Iranian land once again heard the epic of the Iranian people recited through their massive and glorious presence on the scene of renewing their allegiance to the Islamic revolution, the founder of the Islamic republic the late Imam Khomeyni, and the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i.

Such splendid nationwide participation in the rallies dealt a heavy blow to the enemies of the Islamic revolution, particularly the U.S., which has never desisted from hatching plots and taking hostile measures to topple the Islamic government, it added.

The editorial further said, "the Islamic revolution, on the eve of its 18th spring of freedom, once more demonstrated its grandeur, authority, and sovereignty, exposing the defeat and abjection of its sworn foes. The recent history indicates that the dedicated and loyal Iranian people have insured their Islamic revolution through their presence in the arena of defending their divine values."

Thus, the Islamic revolution will never be hindered from making progress toward achieving its exalted ideals and objectives, and the numerous barriers and obstacles created by its enemies cannot withstand its mighty force even a single moment, the editorial concluded.

Iran: People March to Azadi Square for Bahman Grand Rally

LD1102092396 Tehran IRNA in English
0735 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 11, IRNA — Since the early hours of Sunday, huge number of Tehran residents poured into the streets of the Iranian capital from five directions to begin their march towards the 'Azadi' Square where the Grand 'Bahman 22' rally, marking the 17th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution, is to be held.

The familiar scene throughout Tehran this morning is large number of people heading towards the Azadi Square, with placards and posters of the late leader of the Islamic revolution, Imam Khomeyni, leader of the revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, and chanting "Alah-o-Akbar" (God is the Greatest), "Death to America," and "Death to Israel."

The grand rally is attended by a large number of foreign dignitaries, government officials, guests of the Islamic Republic, foreign journalists and huge number of enthusiastic crowd who are once again demonstrating their revolutionary spirit and renewing their allegiance to the revolution and the leader.

The marchers are also commemorating the martyrs of the Islamic revolution and the Iraqi-imposed war, who sacrificed their lives to bring the revolution to victory. "In the 18th spring of freedom, we miss the imam and the martyrs," chant the marchers.

The fasting marchers, are to converge at the Azadi Square where President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani is to deliver a speech.

Today also marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), the first imam of the household of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), the 21st day of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Iran: Oil Reserves Estimated at 140 Billion Barrels

LD1302132596 Tehran IRNA in English
1135 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, Feb. 13, IRNA — Through the application of new technology it is expected that Iran's oil reserves amount to 140 billion barrels, 50 billion barrels more than that [as received] proven reserves, said exploration manager of the Iranian National Oil Company, Mehdi Hoseyni, on Tuesday.

In an interview with the Persian-language daily, 'IRAN', Hoseyni added that at present Iran's proven oil reserves stands at 93 billion barrels.

Hoseyni commenting on Iran's natural gas reserves added that Iran with 21,000 billion cubic meters of natural gas reserves stands second in the world, next to Russia. Hoseyni disclosed that southwestern, northeastern, Dasht-e Moghan regions and most probably the Caspian Sea bed contain huge natural gas reserves, meaning that the real natural gas reserves of Iran far exceeds the proven reserves.

Iran: Minister Releases Steel Production Figures

LD1002211996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1630 GMT 10 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The level of the country's steel production, which stood at less than 1 million tonnes per year at the start of the victory of the Islamic revolution, has now reached 4.7 million tonnes per year and, with the establishment of two new steel plants in the provinces of Azerbaijan and Khorasan and plans to

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expand the steel mills in Esfahan and the Khuzestan steel plant, the country's steel production capacity will reach 10 million tonnes per year by the end of the second five-year plan. [passage omitted]

Mr. Mohammad Hoseyn Mahluji, the minister of mines and metals, said the following about the number of active mines in the country: During the past five years, the number of active mines in the country has increased from 400 mines to 1,600 mines and the level of production of minerals from 35 million tonnes to 74 million tonnes per year.

Iran: Earthquake Registered in Southeast; No Casualties Reported

LD1002104996 Tehran IRNA in English 1041 GMT 10 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sistan-Baluchestan Prov., Feb. 10, IRNA — An earthquake measuring 4.5 degrees on the Richter scale shook Zahedan, southeast Iran, at 09:30 hours local time Saturday.

The seismological base of the Geophysics Institute of Tehran University registered the epicenter at 900 km southeast of the base, vicinity of Zahedan.

No casualties were reported.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Leghari Receives Afghan Faction Leader Dostam

BK1202150496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Afghan leaders now gathered in Islamabad continued their efforts to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement for lasting peace in Afghanistan. The leaders are expected to have another round of parleys today.

General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of Jonbesh-e Melli-ye Afghanistan [National Islamic Unity of Afghanistan], called on President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari at the Aiwan-i-Sadr [Presidency] in Islamabad today and exchanged views on the latest political developments in Afghanistan. Talking to the Afghan leader, the president expressed deep concern over the continuing internecine conflict in Afghanistan and expressed the hope that peace and stability would soon return to the brotherly country, which would also facilitate the return of 1.4 million Afghan refugees in safety and honor. The president underlined Afghanistan's important geopolitical position in the region and expressed full support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The president observed that the welfare of the people of Pakistan lies in promoting peace and tranquility in the region. He expressed Pakistan's keen interest in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan as soon as peace returns in Afghanistan.

The meeting lasted for about an hour. General Dostam was accompanied by Mr. Muhaqqiqi of Hezb-e Wahdat and Agha Mansoor Nadiri from Baghlan.

Pakistan: Minister on Investigation of Embassy Blast

NC1302101996 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 9 Feb 96 pp 8-9

[Interview with Pakistani Interior Minister Nasrullah Babar by Makram Muhammad Ahmad in Islamabad; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ahmad] How many Egyptians and Arabs do you think are living in Pakistan following the Afghan liberation war?

[Babar] There are conflicting estimates. Some say there are 20 [as published] Egyptians while others say far fewer. We cannot determine their exact number or identify them, because they live in the Afghan refugee camps on the border areas or inside Afghanistan. They wear native dress and speak the native language and sometimes marry Afghan or Pakistani women, which complicates things. But our clear position is that we are willing to hand over anyone whenever there is information about his whereabouts and activity.

Egypt has received two terrorist groups. The first, in June 1995, consisted of five people who lived in the Peshawar area on the border. The second group, handed over in July of the same year, consisted of four people. The two groups were transported on board two Egyptian private planes after a specialized Pakistani court endorsed their handover under an agreement on the extradition of criminals. The agreement was signed in Islamabad in 1994 by the Egyptian justice minister, Counselor Faruq Sayf-al-Nasr, and the then Pakistani justice minister, Iqbal Haider, who is now minister of human rights.

[Ahmad] What progress was made in recent investigations into the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad?

[Babar] There is unequivocal evidence that the two people who perpetrated the crime died in the attack. One was the driver of the booby-trapped car. The other died outside the embassy walls after he threw the first explosive charge that destroyed the building's wall and enabled the booby-trapped car to enter the embassy yard.

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[Ahmad] Quoting Pakistani security sources, some Pakistani newspapers "today" [punctuation as published] reported the arrest of two Sudanese nationals. One is Muhammad 'Ali Sayyid Ahmad and the second Bashir al-Khadim. They worked at a religious school belonging to the Saudi Red Crescent Organization. The newspapers reported that Muhammad 'Ali Sayyid Ahmad bought the car used in the attack from a showroom in the Rawalpindi area near Peshawar.

[Babar] The story is old and untrue. I do not know why journalists publish stories that preliminary investigations prove to be untrue.

Muhammad Ahmad died on the day of the attack outside the embassy walls. He was identified from a photo shown to the car showroom owner and by Egyptian security experts who confirmed that he was one of the leaders abroad involved with terrorist groups inside the country.

[Ahmad] How can you be sure?

[Babar] We discovered the engine number of the booby-trapped car in the rubble in the Egyptian embassy yard. When we could not determine the origins of the car, we sent an inquiry to the manufacturing company in Japan, which replied that the car was sold to a Pakistani agency. This clue helped us identify the car dealer in Peshawar, who identified Muhammad Ahmad from his photograph after the incident.

[Ahmad] There were great expectations that the team of U.S. investigators who came to help the Pakistani authorities would uncover the mystery of the incident.

[Babar] The U.S. team's mission was confined to analyzing the explosives used in the incident. Their final report proved that the criminals used 500 pounds of pure T.N.T. It has also been proven that this type of explosive existed in Pakistan.

[Ahmad] Has the embassy bombing investigation been closed?

[Babar] It has been proven that the two people involved were killed in the incident. But the important part of the case concerning the masterminds and financiers who abetted the crime remains. One of the defendants charged with funding the operation was arrested after numerous false passports were found in his home. He is Egyptian, has Canadian citizenship, and worked as regional director of a Canadian relief agency in the Peshawar area. But he insists on denying the charges, even though there are several pieces of evidence confirming his complicity in the plot and his son-in- law's complicity in preparing for this crime.

[Ahmad] Is this person still hiding in the refugee camps in the border areas?

[Babar] Information has it that his name is Khalid and he fled to Afghanistan. We are pursing him and waiting for the chance to hunt him down because he is an important clue in the case.

[Ahmad] Have any of the extremist Pakistani groups helped the criminals?

[Babar] It is difficult to confirm this because these groups have no interest in this incident and, most probably, the crime was committed without their knowing.

[Ahmad] Yesterday, Saudi Arabia received a Saudi national said to have played a role in the bombing of the National Guard building in Riyadh.

[Babar] Yes, this is true, because we pursue a clear policy that allows no one to engage in this type of activity on Pakistani territory. Investigations proved that this person is connected with Usamah Bin-Ladin, who lives in Khartoum, and that he was one of his main aides in organizing the operations of the Arab Afghans. We identified this person after hard work; he married a Pakistani girl from Kashmir and can speak Urdu.

[Ahmad] What measures have you taken to stop the doors being opened wide to such people?

[Babar] We have tightened entry measures so that we know the identity of each arrival. We have also enacted a law obligating the proprietors of hotels and residences to notify the police of foreigners staying in their hotels or residences and to submit their passports to the nearest police post. We have emphasized the need for Arab embassy approval of the renewal of residence for Arab residents in Pakistan.

[Ahmad] A huge arms trade is currently going on in Pakistan. Terrorist organizations, the drugs mafia, and Afghan mujahidin are taking part in this trade.

[Babar] The problem is that after funding for particular groups of the Afghan mujahidin stopped, the trade in opium, heroin, and arms thrived to compensate for the shortage of funds. Imagine. The price of a U.S. machine gun does not exceed $300.

[Ahmad] Which is the largest Arab group that played a tangible role in sending these Arabs to Afghanistan?

[Babar] I believe it is the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which, in its capacity as an international organization assisting in the mujahidin war, used its good relations with Musa Shafiq, who held the post of prime minister and studied at al-Azhar, to bring in large numbers of people from all the Arab countries to Pakistan.

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Pakistan: Editorial — Talks With U.S. Prove 'Futile'

BK1202134196 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 12 Feb 96 p 10

[Editorial: "Clear-Cut Assurances Should Be Obtained From the U.S."]

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali is currently holding important and sensitive talks with U.S. authorities in Washington. Although these negotiations are being termed as a normal exchange of views on matters of mutual interest, mounting tension in South Asia due to India's nuclear and missile program, the issue of supply of magnetic rings for Pakistan's Kahuta Plant from China, and rumors about the suspension of the implementation of the Brown amendment have given extra- ordinary importance to these talks. Under the Brown Amendment, Pakistan was to receive military equipment worth $368 million which had been held up since 1991 due to the black law of the United States — the Pressler amendment — despite the fact that Pakistan had already paid for this equipment. This was in keeping with a promise President Clinton made to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto saying that the United States does not consider it fair that it has received the money and yet did not supply the equipment released to Pakistan. Last month, President Clinton approved the bill according to which, through the Brown amendment, Pakistan was to be provided the withheld military equipment. This was not a favor to Pakistan but a fulfillment of a business deal under which the United States was morally bound to provide the equipment to Pakistan. (Pakistan could go to court to get its money or the equipment). At the time of the passage of the Brown Amendment, it was also said that U.S. investors would now be able to make investments in Pakistan. It was also hoped that Pakistan would get back the money it had paid for the F-16's (through the sale of these planes to a third country) which had been withheld for the past five years. At that time another pleasant impression was also created whereby the United States realized the geopolitical importance of Pakistan and it recognized Pakistan's important position in rapidly changing conditions in this region. At the time it was also felt that the United States was really concerned about India's stand on its nuclear and missile program and about the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and that it would use its influence over India to stop the nuclear and missile race in the subcontinent. But all these impressions and expectations proved to be futile. Baseless reports in U.S. newspapers about the transfer of nuclear technology from China to Pakistan have not only diluted the pleasant impression of the Brown Amendment but have tarnished Pakistan-U.S. relations too. Both Pakistan and China have strongly denied these speculative American CIA reports, but the pro-Indian American Zionist circles under the influence of "Ram Krishna Culture", are coming up with strange interpretations of the Brown Amendment. Media sources owned by the Zionist lobby are also misleading the Clinton administration on the issue of the so-called Pakistan-China nuclear collaboration. This is a big conspiracy which the Zionist circles have hatched against China and the Muslim world. It seems they are trying to victimize Pakistan not only under the Pressler amendment but also under the Glenn Symington amendment and the sanctions recommended by the 1994 law on nuclear non-proliferation. Imposition of these black laws on Pakistan will not only deprive Pakistan of U.S. assistance but aid from international sources will also be stopped.

Pakistan is receiving economic aid from the World Bank, IMF, the Asian Development Bank, and aid consortiums. In about two months the aid consortiums will hold a meeting to discuss approval of economic aid to Pakistan for the year 1996-97. The United States enjoys extraordinary influence in these organizations. American directors and the staff of these organizations are bound to oppose approval of aid to any country that is not a member of the nuclear club and still possesses nuclear facilities which are exempt from inspection from IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency]. At the moment, the Government of Pakistan is supporting U.S. interests even at the cost of annoying its own people. If despite this unconditional support from the Government of Pakistan the United States instead of lending support to Pakistan is bent on leaving it alone under the hegemony of the rising nuclear power — India — then Pakistan cannot accept this "friendly" gift from the United States at the cost of its existence, security, and economic viability. Pakistan will have to revise its relations with the United States. We believe that Sardar Aseff Ali should make it clear in his negotiations with American authorities that Pakistan is not ready to compromise its existence and security for some false promises and very small interests. It would be senseless for Pakistan to continue to fulfill all U.S. demands just to maintain useless friendly relations or to sacrifice its existence and security to uphold U.S. interests. This would be a suicidal act which Pakistan cannot commit. It is high time that the United States is asked in clear terms whether or not Pakistan will be provided the military equipment being withheld since 1991 despite paying for it. When will we get the money paid for the F-16's back. What policy does the United States want to adopt on India's nuclear and missile program, and as an ally what can it do for Pakistan's security and for countering the threats Pakistan is facing. And why has the United States withdrawn its support for UN Security Council

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resolutions about the Kashmir dispute. If Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali cannot obtain satisfactory answers to these questions from the United States then there is no need for him to waste his time there. He should return and try to find some new axis for Pakistan's foreign policy.

Pakistan: Politician Condemns Proposal for UN Control of Kashmir

BK1302094296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 13 Feb 96 p 16

[APP Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Chairman parliamentary committee on Kashmir and veteran politician Nawabzada Nasrullah has strongly condemned the proposal of some Pakistanis intellectuals to give occupied Kashmir under the control of the United Nations.

Addressing a press conference here Monday [12 Feb] at his residence, he urged upon the government, politicians and patriotic forces to take serious notice of the proposal.

Commenting on the proposal of former Federal Minister Dr. Mahbubul Haq presented from the platform of Pak-India Friendship Forum Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said such proposals were against the basis idea of right of self-determination for which Kashmiris were sacrificing their lives.

The Chairman Kashmir Committee said that the government should also take action according to the laws against such non-government organizations which were working against the national ideology and damaging the cause of Kashmir movement.

He said that there should be national consensus on this issue as the elements behind the proposal of handing over the control of occupied Kashmir to UN were foreign agents and against the national interest.

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said when the government and the members of the Kashmir Committee of the Parliament were working to project the atrocities of India forces in occupied Kashmir, such elements were working to damage these efforts.

He said that over 50,000 Kashmiris have lost their lives in the Kashmir struggle in the occupied Kashmir and there was unprecedented Indian aggression in the held valley with its six lakh army deputed there.

The efforts of such so called intellectuals, he said, were only to deprive the Kashmiris from their right of self-determination which was their legitimate right according to the resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations.

He said that after the collapse of Soviet Union, the world has become uni-polar.

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said that after giving the control of Kashmir to the United Nations, its influence will be increased to many areas of Pakistan which will be an indication of interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

He also condemned a meeting of Pakistan chapter of the Pak-India Friendship Forum which held in Islamabad recently where these intellectuals spoke against national ideology and Hadiths of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and also declared India as peace- loving country and alleged that Pakistan imposed war on India.

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said that such sentiments expressed by these intellectuals in the functions were regrettable and should be condemned by all the politicians and patriotic forces.

He also condemned their suggestion of decreasing defence budget and said that such intellectuals were in act playing the game of their foreign masters.

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan also condemned the projection of associated conference of freedom fighters organised by India forces in Srinagar recently who claimed that there were ready to negotiate with India and Pakistan has nothing to do with Kashmir solution.

He said that all the real freedom fighters struggling for their rights in occupied Kashmir have condemned their role and declared them traitors.

Nawabzada said that the point of view of these so-called freedom fighters that the Kashmir problem was in fact between Indian and Kashmir and Pakistan has nothing to do in the issue was also highlighted by Indian Government. He said that Pakistan's foreign office should take immediate action to reply Indian propaganda on the issue and clarify the situation.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister—Terrorism Must Be Controlled Militarily

BK1302122096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 13 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Defense Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte says that LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorism can only be controlled militarily. The LTTE was now in the process of attempting to create trouble in Colombo with the aim of getting down the forces from the north. The minister was speaking at a ceremony organized at the ministry yesterday

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to accept donations to the National Defense Fund. The minister emphasized that the military operations in the north would not be curtailed whatever tactics the LTTE undertake. The terrorists, who have been defeated by the forces, are also attempting to create communal disturbances in the south, thereby destabilizing the economy. The minister expressed his gratitude to the people of the south for acting with restraint and not being misled by such activities. Noting that the LTTE would be destroyed before long [in] the government's operations, General Ratwatte pledged to bring about a peace environment in the country before long.

Sri Lanka: Parliament Extends Emergency; Vows To End LTTE 'Terrorism'

BK1002121696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A motion to extend the emergency by a further month was passed in parliament yesterday without a vote being taken. Winding up the debate, deputy defense minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte pledged to eradicate LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorism from the country and establish peace. The government requires the support of the people in this task and he said that it had the necessary strength. Noting that the LTTE wanted to stop this exercise, the minister said that the Colombo attack was launched with this aim. They may try such activities in future, however, the government will take all measures to avoid such incidents. Pointing out that peace cannot be fully established with a military solution, Gen. Ratwatte added that a political solution was also necessary; the government was working with this aim.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said that the governmeat was working with close cooperation with other countries in defeating LTTE terrorists. Opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe said that the government had been unsuccessful in providing security to the city of Colombo. He requested it to disclose the policy during such a crisis situation.

Sri Lanka: Troops Kill 30 Civilians in Retaliation for LTTE Attack

BK1202141596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1345 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Feb 12 (AFP) — Security forces went on the rampage and killed at least 30 civilians after Tamil Tiger guerrillas shot dead two soldiers in northeastern Sri Lanka, local officials said Monday.

Army troops attacked residents at the Tamil village of Kumarapuram Sunday following an ambush by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), officials said.

"The soldiers started shooting after two of their colleagues were killed by the Tigers," a local official said. "At least 30 civilians were killed and another 25 wounded."

Pro-government Tamil legislators denounced the attack as an act that would strengthen the Tamil Tigers.

"This kind of massacre will only send the people into the arms of the Tigers," the Tamil MP said.

The military here reported the deaths of the two soldiers but said only one civilian aged 12 years was killed in the crossfire with the Tamil Tigers.

Meanwhile, local officials said four police constables were killed in another LTTE ambush Monday in the same area.

Tamil Tiger guerrillas are leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

Sri Lanka: Army, Police Probe Attack on Tamil Civilians

BK1302022796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 13 Feb 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Army and Police yesterday launched separate investigations into an attack on a village in Muttur, Trincomalee that left 24 Tamil civilians dead and 26 wounded on Sunday night.

According to a defence official, the attack had taken place in the village of Kumarapuram between Kiliveddi and the 15th mile post on the Muttur-Batticaloa Main Road. He said that survivors had spoken of men in military uniform who had gone into the houses during the night and opened fire indiscrimanately at the villagers.

"We are trying to find out who the killers really are as there is an attempt to blame the military for the attack," said a senior military officer in Trincomalee. He said that the attack had taken place about two miles away from where two soldiers were killed from an ambush by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] on Sunday evening. A 12 year old child too was killed in the terrorist fire, the military officer said.

"The fact that the two incidents occured, one after the other, in the Muttur area would make it that much easier

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for the terrorists and their sympathisers to point the finger at the military for the attack on the village," said the officer .

"Perhaps in the early days of the conflict, soldiers may have reacted in this manner for the killing of two comrades. But, today, when large numbers are getting killed in LTTE ambushes you find it difficult to believe that they would react in such a way," he said.

Meanwhile a military analyst pointed out that one should consider the ground situation in a case like this before passing on judgement. He said that it was well known that the LTTE had free movement in the Muttur area and only a few days ago they had increased their activities which included the extortion of money from the people in the area.

"We should also consider who stands to gain from such an incident. From the day the LTTE reneged on the peace talks, they have come in for criticism from the outside world. Their recent bomb attack on the Central Bank, which killed 83 civilians and wounded over 1000 more, brought forth outright condemnation from the western countries which earlier sympathised with them.

"Alleged military excesses in what is now known as Eelam war I gained them the world's sympathy and it is possible that they may be trying the same card again," said the analyst adding that it was the more reason that the government should have a swift and thorough investigation to find out the real culprits behind the attack.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Denies EU Claims of Links to Mafia

BK1202143896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels accused by the European Commission's envoy to South Asia of possible links to organized crimes have vehemently denied ties with the mafia. Francine Henrich expressing the European Union's solidarity with Sri Lanka's efforts to stem the rebel separatist campaign on Tuesday [6 Feb] told reporters in Colombo there were some indication the guerrillas were involved in drug trafficking and with the mafia.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] in a letter sent to Henrich from the Northern Jaffna peninsula said her comments were grossly misleading and highly slanderous. We wish to state categorically that we have no links with the mafia nor are we involved in drug trafficking, the LTTE's head of political section, S.B. Tamil Selvan, said in a letter faxed to the REUTERS yesterday.

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